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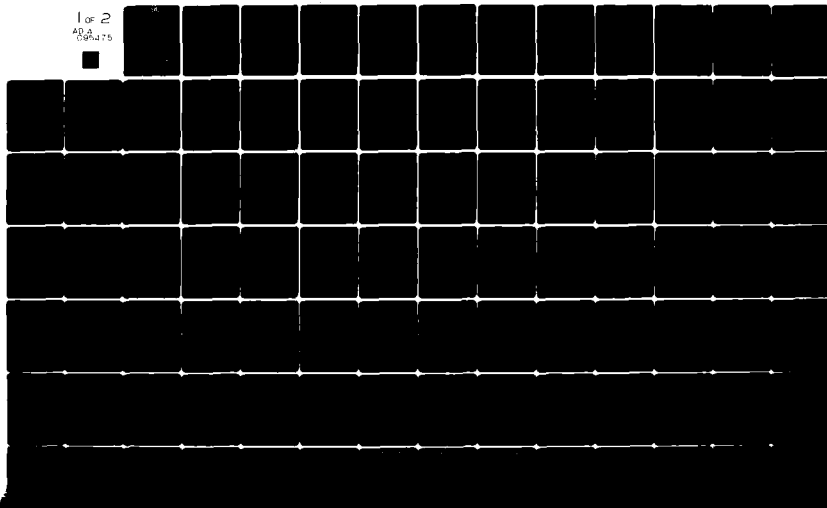
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (--ETC(U)  
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE  
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AS A REFLECTION OF MASS MEDIA USES AND FUNCTIONS  
IN THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

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A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

JAMES E. SWARTZ, CPT, USAR  
B.J., University of Missouri, 1969  
M.A., University of Missouri, 1971

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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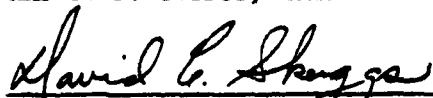
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student  
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(References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

# ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) AS A REFLECTION OF MASS MEDIA USES AND FUNCTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, by Captain James E. Swartz, USAR, 102 pages.

This study examines the evolution of the public affairs function within the United States federal government. The study examines in detail the development of public affairs within the Department of Defense from the time of the National Security Act of 1947 until 1963.

The major thesis of the study suggests that this development was uneven. From 1947 until 1957, the ranking Department of Defense public affairs officer was accorded little power, status, or prestige. Although Murray Snyder became the nation's first assistant secretary of defense solely with public affairs responsibilities, evidence suggests that it was not until 1961 that Arthur Sylvester, Snyder's successor, prompted significant changes within public affairs activities of the Pentagon.

A number of reasons are given to suggest that considerable change took place in Department of Defense public affairs during the early 1960s. Perhaps the key change agent was President John F. Kennedy, who understood public affairs as well as if not better than any twentieth century president other than Franklin D. Roosevelt. Kennedy's leadership abilities and confidence in Sylvester as spokesman for the nation, combined with the president's polished use of the media provide the central evidence to prove the thesis.

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First, special thanks must be given to the H.V. Kaltenborn Foundation, Palm Beach, Florida, and the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education, New York City, for their generous financial support. Dr. Forrest Pogue of the Smithsonian Institution, where I served as Dwight D. Eisenhower Fellow, also provided assistance, guidance, and an intellectual home in Washington, D.C.

Second, Mrs. Cindy Jeffery, Mrs. Marilyn Harre, Mrs. Emi Prindle, and Mrs. Patricia Wilson deserve recognition for their administrative support, much of which was needed on short notice.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Volumes have been written since the signing of our Declaration of Independence about the genesis and growth of the United States government. Historians, political scientists, journalists, and other observers long have documented the transition this nation's governing body has taken from its colonial days to the present.

More recently, within the past century, these observers have focused some attention on the growing external institution which increasingly has directed a critical eye (a "watchdog" role as it has become known) on government operations, the institution most simply known as the press. By 1900 many large newspapers, seeking sensational type of stories fashionable during the period in order to boost an already skyrocketing circulation, had assigned beat reporters to monitor regularly the affairs of the federal government.

The influx of reporters to the nation's capital dictated a change in the relationship between the government and the press. Demands for news from the growing Washington press corps multiplied rapidly during the early decades of the 1900s. As a result, government executives turned what once was largely an additional duty for low-level managers and secretaries, that of disseminating information of less than critical importance, into a full-time position: that of public information officer. More recently the title has been changed in many circles to public affairs officer, reflective of the many duties performed outside of direct press responsi-

bilities. Thus, management of internal information programs, community relations, and even speechwriting, in some cases, are those duties peculiar to the public affairs officer.

By the late 1920s President Herbert Hoover had such an official on his staff,<sup>1</sup> and by World War II all members of the cabinet did as well. Today, perhaps as many as ten thousand public affairs officers follow, and even implement, federal government policy in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Curiously, however, little attention has been directed toward the rise of the government public affairs officer. There have been many studies of White House press secretaries, yet many other such individuals have become in recent years among the more visible and sometimes powerful figures in the world. Current Assistant Secretary of State (Public Affairs) Hodding Carter, United States spokesman during the recent crises in Iran and Afghanistan, serves as a present-day example.

The most visible and powerful, of course, have been White House press secretaries, of which those under Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt (Steve Early) and Dwight D. Eisenhower (Jim Hagerty) are noted most frequently for their broad range of accomplishments that served to contribute to the course of public information history. Pierre Salinger, secretary to John F. Kennedy, and the current White House press secretary, Jody Powell, are others who have attempted to pursue this tradition.

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1. Henry Fairlie, "The Rise of the Press Secretary," The New Republic 178, 11 (March 18, 1978), p. 20.

2. There is no definite figure for public affairs officials in government. The total varies, dependent upon various definitions of duties and whether such duties occupy all of an employee's time or merely part of it. Counting those persons in uniform performing public affairs duties, the Department of Defense has a substantial lead among government agencies in terms of number employed in the field, either from a full-time or a part-time perspective.

Yet most public affairs officers work in arenas outside of the president's immediate domain, in federal departments and agencies, and it is here that public affairs activities have been relatively obscure and unpublicized. It is here, as well, that the role of the public affairs officer differs from that in the White House and that there is a profound need for academic investigation.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, there was a rapid increase in the number of public affairs personnel employed in government. However, though the numbers of federal publicists grew, the breadth of their duties and responsibilities, almost without exception, did not increase in any distinguishable measure. These individuals' most significant task was to field press queries, investigate answers from executives whom they shielded from hostile reporters and to parrot the executives' responses, of lack thereof, to the press.

Indeed, during this period the power and prestige of the public affairs officer generally was limited to directing an internal staff. Even within executive departments, such as the Departments of State or Defense, government publicists were viewed with considerable reservation and, in some cases, scorn. Many of those pursuing other duties in federal offices simply believed that public affairs personnel were too friendly and altogether too revealing to an adversary press.

Frequently, these early-day publicists were required to report through several layers of intermediate offices in order to reach an executive for responses to press queries. Thus, they usually failed to satisfy the demands of the press due to their relative inability to gain direct access to key government figures. This, in turn, lowered the publicists' stature within the journalistic fraternity toward which much effort was directed.

The winds of change from the traditional model of the government publicist began by the middle 1950s, when first, the Department of State and then the Department of Defense elevated their ranking public affairs

officers to the assistant secretary level. It will be argued in this paper, however, that it was not until the early 1960s when a newer model of the government publicist began to broadly emerge in function, not merely title, and it is toward such a change that this thesis is directed.

The specific purpose of this undertaking, then, is to suggest ways in which the model of the government publicist emerged into a considerably more active and responsible role. Evidence will be presented to further suggest that the backdrop for such a change generally was during the administration of John F. Kennedy, a man who fostered the idea of a more dynamic and powerful public affairs organization in government. It further will be suggested that it was within the Department of Defense, with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Arthur Sylvester as principals, that this notion was most visible.

The rise of the Kennedy era cabinet-level publicist in general, and of Arthur Sylvester as a public affairs change agent in particular, might be traced in a large part to the following phenomena:

--First, the people of the United States during the early 1960s generally supported and admired both President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense McNamara, both of whom were among the more popular political figures in Washington during the era.

--Second, both President Kennedy and, largely through the influence of Kennedy, Secretary McNamara were sensitive and responsive to the need for information by the press and public,<sup>3</sup> thus allowing for more powerful public affairs representation within the Kennedy administration.

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3. This was a continuing theme raised in personal interviews such as those with Arthur Sylvester, Phil G. Goulding, Marx Leva and other Department of Defense officials. The interviews were conducted in the Washington, D.C., area during 1978 and 1979.

--Third, the ranking publicist of the administration, White House Secretary Pierre Salinger, was regarded, from an internal perspective at least, as a man in the mold of Steve Early and Jim Hagerty by many; his managerial style was to have an impact upon public affairs associates within the executive branch.

--Fourth, Arthur Sylvester--probably more than any cabinet-level publicist in government before him--developed a close working relationship with both President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Sylvester operated on a first-name basis with McNamara.<sup>5</sup>

--Fifth, Sylvester's credentials as a tough critic of government on the one hand and a Washington bureau chief for the Newark (N.J.) News on the other allowed him a rather high level of credibility with the Washington press corps, again possibly more than any of his predecessors.<sup>6</sup>

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4. It should be noted here that virtually all of Sylvester's predecessors did not have a daily access to the secretary of defense other than via indirect means such as through an aide, deputy or assistant. Some were known to have been two and even three echelons removed from the secretary. Sylvester is believed to be the only one at the time who had reported directly to the president with any frequency.

5. Interview with Arthur Sylvester, Cold Spring, New York, August 8, 1978.

6. Of Sylvester's predecessors, Robert W. Berry, William Frye, Marx Leva, Osgood Roberts, Frederick A. Seaton and Robert Tripp Ross had little or no experience working within the civilian media as reporters of any type. Only the remaining four, Harold B. Hinton, Clayton Fritchey, Andrew Berding and Murray Snyder, had considerable journalistic experience. Of this group, Snyder was the sole person to serve in office as long as eighteen months. The Pentagon press corps tended to trust one of their own colleagues most, yet none of Sylvester's predecessors had any substantive experience as a Department of Defense reporter. Hinton, Fritchey, Berding and Snyder best would be classified either as war correspondents and/or political reporters. Although not a defense expert himself, Sylvester was a Washington bureau chief and occasionally called upon himself to cover Pentagon matters.

--Finally, the early 1960s were marked by considerable social, political and cultural changes in the nation that contributed to the heightened exposure of government publicists, the most important of which might have been the incredible growth of the television industry. This final issue will be discussed at length in this paper.

Thus, on a broader level, three themes reflecting these changes are important to note here: 1) The technological advances in the broadcasting and satellite industries reduced the time from event to report and simultaneously brought government spokesman into American homes more vividly and frequently; 2) A growing level of sophistication by reporters, given more space and time for in-depth investigation, brought public affairs personnel before the public through all media more frequently; and 3) Twentieth century leaders such as President Kennedy, whose career paralleled and broadcasting boom from the 1920s to the 1960s, appreciated the need for a strong public image and, in turn, place considerable faith and confidence in his public affairs subordinates to support that image.

Sylvester simply was caught amid these favorable currents of history. His controversial personality reflective of one who was unwilling to allow change to take place merely in due course was, however, the force which argues strongly for an investigation into how he contributed to the change of the role of public affairs officer during his tenure as chief spokesman for the Department of Defense.

This thesis, set within the arena of the nation's largest and probably most powerful public department, offers a slice of a person's life who broke with tradition so greatly that the individual became considerably unrepresentative of those who preceded. Perhaps more significantly, he also established so many standing procedures that he was to become a representa-

tive example for, and catalyst to, those who were to follow him.

In order to provide a suitable focus for this study, attention primarily will be directed to the Kennedy years of Sylvester's six-year tenure as assistant secretary. More specifically, it will be suggested that it was Sylvester's relationship with the press, bolstered by the full confidence that he enjoyed from both President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara (which many of Sylvester's predecessors did not from their superiors), that dictated a change in the public image of the public affairs executive.

One event, and a follow-up event, offer evidence to support this hypothesis. During the latter days of October 1962, the United States was threatened by nuclear warheads some ninety miles from American shores in Cuba. In a closed National Security Council Executive Committee meeting, President Kennedy directed that Assistant Secretary of Defense Sylvester would be the nation's daily operational spokesman to the press and public. The White House press secretary, Pierre Salinger, only would report on the President's actions, and the ranking State Department spokesman, Robert Manning, only would handle diplomatic developments.<sup>7</sup>

In previous situations concerning major events, the White House staff generally served as the only public affairs representative between the government and the press. Never before had a government public affairs official outside of the White House assumed such a visible position for such an extended period. As mentioned, President Kennedy's confidence was a key reason, but the growth of television as a medium that penetrated the majority of American households and demanded even more government information was also important.

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7. Interview with Sylvester, *ibid.* The decision was reached on October 23, 1962.

It should be noted here that it is not so critical to chronicle an event within a society but, rather, to interpret the general perception of the event. The government spokesman serves to influence that perception greatly through what he says and reveals as well as what he fails to say and reveal. Assistant Secretary Sylvester, it will be argued, served to elevate the role of the government spokesman, in part, by his performance during the Cuban crisis of 1962.

The impact of Sylvester's presence before Americans during the missile crisis perhaps might have been less significant had it not been for a related event, one which took place nearly six weeks after the Soviet Union had dismantled their offensive missiles from the Cuban heartland. During a December speech to a Sigma Delta Chi journalism fraternity gathering, Sylvester was quoted as saying that the government had "a right to lie" to the public. This comment, regardless of its authenticity, sparked a furious debate between the press and government that continues even today, particularly as a news management issue.

It was a related event to the Cuban situation of October 1962 that then served to perpetuate the Sylvester image before the public. An investigation into the "right to lie" debate will be included within this study, serving as further evidence to support the argument that Sylvester was, through his candor, prominent in the evolution of the role of the government publicist.

Several events prior to the crisis in Cuba deserve attention here, too. Prior to 1961 high-ranking military officers spoke out against government policy, checked only occasionally and usually by the President himself. Decorated generals such as Douglas MacArthur paid no attention to the warnings of Pentagon publicity men. Sylvester, despite pressure from the services,



proved to be the generals' match. For years as well, public affairs practitioners followed some sort of operating doctrine peculiar to their place in government. Each new departmental head of public affairs routinely would draft such a doctrine tailored to personal requirements. Sylvester was an exception. He fashioned a more binding public affairs charter than ever before, one which even the sometimes rebellious military services took note of, and one that remains in force today--nearly two decades later.<sup>8</sup>

This study will be historical in nature. It intends to use primary source materials where possible and further intends to cross-check sources when circumstances permit. Secondary sources such as newspaper accounts will be used where primary source materials cannot be located.

It should be noted here that the terms public affairs officer, publicist and government spokesman will be used interchangeably. All public affairs officers, or publicists, in government do not serve as spokesman to the press, to be sure, but the principal figure of the study, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Arthur Sylvester and most of his successors have assumed this role. The earlier mentioned terms, rather than Sylvester's full title, will be used in the interest of variety and brevity.

It is expected that this study will examine the development of the public information function within the Department of Defense in light of technological developments in the mass media during the twentieth century, notably television.

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8. Department of Defense Directive 5122.2, Charter for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, D.C., July 10, 1961. A copy of the document can be found in the appendix of this study.

It is further expected that this study will suggest how the government publicist became part and parcel of the decision process in the bureaucracy partly as a result of technological advances.

It is also expected that this study will investigate how certain interpersonal relationships, fueled in part by one major event in the United States history, also served to change the image and role of the key public affairs adviser to the secretary of defense.

This change, it will be suggested, has generated considerable debate about the relationship between press and government. Although not within the purview of this modest undertaking, it might be suggested elsewhere that the emerging model of the government publicist, as exemplified by Sylvester, may have become prevalent in departments and agencies outside the Pentagon in more recent years.

A less detailed objective of the study will be comparative in nature. This will include an investigation into the growth of government public affairs before Sylvester's tenure, serving as a prelude to the central thesis. Finally, some conclusions will be offered about the role of the publicist in government.

## CHAPTER II

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO 1961

In 1939, James L. McCamy wrote in what was to become a classic in public relations literature, Government Publicity, that the government publicist is a "tool of administration." He "creates no policy, enforces no rules, reflects only policies of the bureaucracy."<sup>1</sup>

This chapter will explore how the role of the government publicist developed before the presidency of John Kennedy, essentially reinforcing McCamy's observation of more than forty years ago. This will serve to explain in part how differently public affairs were approached during the early 1960s, which will be examined in the following chapters.

The idea of government public affairs was dealt with in vague and rather informal ways during America's first century and did not take form until the Civil War. It was then that leaders of the United and Confederate States first were faced with the problem of how to handle reporters from various newspapers. The first major technological advance important to the reporter, the patent of the telegraph by Samuel F. B. Morse in 1840, allowed newspapers to send reporters to most settled areas of the nation and to expect a report of the area's activities during the same day. A military issue, censorship of tactical information, became a problem. Military leaders not only needed to be wary of a uniformed enemy, but also of overzealous reporters who might send information of military importance via telegraph lines to a newspaper, the public and perhaps even the enemy.<sup>2</sup>

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1. James L. McCamy, Government Publicity (Chicago: University of Press, 1939), p. 261.

2. John J. Christy, "Reorganization of the Office of Public Information Department of Defense," (Student thesis, United States Army War College, 1959), p. 15.

The usual reaction of military leaders toward press queries during this period was that of distrust. This lack of harmony in turn forced some reporters to complete their stories with questionable sources, if any at all.<sup>3</sup> There apparently was no effort made toward appointing government representatives to work with the press during the 1860s. Only the Army's adjutant general is believed to have maintained any regular contact with the press through occasional letters of inquiries to or from editors and publishers.<sup>4</sup>

With the rise of the penny press, "yellow journalism" and the mass marketing of newspapers during the later 1800s, it became clear that the press would demand considerably more frequent, accurate and timely information from the government. Rivalries between newspaper organizations, such as those between the growing Hearst and Pulitzer empires, dictated the need for some internal apparatus within government that would serve the needs of the press. One minor move toward that end was made by the War Department during the Spanish American War in 1898 when an aide to the secretary of war began to post bulletins outside the secretary's office.<sup>5</sup> The press was not satisfied. The adjutant general of the Army complained that news-hungry reporters were reading official orders over the shoulders of staff officers and then were publishing the information without approval.<sup>6</sup> Despite published reports that caused some military reversals

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3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 16.

5. Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 418.

6. William G. McNamara, "A Critical Analysis of the Formation and Development of the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Within the U.S. Department of Defense," (Master's thesis, The American University, 1963), p. 18. It should be noted here that while McNamara advanced some of Christy's ideas of 1959, he also plagiarized part of the Christy study.

during the war with Spain, no firm press policy was established.<sup>7</sup>

Even by the turn of the century, there was no individual in government with specific, full-time public affairs duties. Nineteenth century presidents, for example, either dealt directly with the press, as had President Abraham Lincoln on most occasions, or employed a personal secretary who, as an additional duty, collected press inquiries for later response by the president.

Indeed, the first full-time publicist in America may have been in the private sector at Harvard University. In 1900, a publicity bureau was established in Boston to publicize and promote the nation's oldest institution of higher learning.<sup>8</sup>

Although Harvard's idea was not to gain acceptance within the federal government for some years, it was during this period that the press was accorded a somewhat higher degree of status in Washington. As vice president under William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt shortly before the turn of the century provided Washington correspondents with a permanent working space in the White House. Then, after assuming the presidency upon President McKinley's assassination in 1901, Roosevelt began a close relationship of confidence with, and trust in, the press.<sup>9</sup>

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7. Ibid.

8. Cutlip, "Public Relations in the Government," Public Relations Review 2 (Summer 1976): 6.

9. Henry Fairlie, "The Rise of the Press Secretary," The New Republic 178 (March 18, 1978): 20.

He was first to use public relations practices to generate public support for programs, developed such techniques as the "leak" and "media event" and regularly scheduled meetings with the press.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout his tenure, President Roosevelt followed the lead of his predecessors and dealt directly with the press. However, he was highly perceptive of press needs. Thus, like President Andrew Jackson who used Amos Kendall as a press relations advisor during the "kitchen cabinet" years of the 1820s and 1930s,<sup>11</sup> Roosevelt employed a personal media consultant in Archie Butt. Butt also served in other capacities for the president.

Butt remained at the White House as advisor when William Howard Taft assumed the presidency in 1909. He performed many different duties for Taft just as he had for Roosevelt.<sup>12</sup> Butt's successor, Joseph P. Tumulty, who became public relations aide to Woodrow Wilson before World War I, officially was known as Wilson's personal secretary. In function, his duties were narrower than Butt's and generally included media relations and administrative assistance to President Wilson. Tumulty's duties perhaps most significantly included the organization of the first White House press conference which President Wilson initiated on a twice weekly basis in 1913.<sup>13</sup>

After World War I, a new president, Warren Harding, and a new medium for news transmission, radio, became a part of American society. Harding was the first president to be heard throughout a large part of the nation

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10. Cutlip, "Public Relations in the Government," p. 10.

11. Cutlip and Center, p. 54.

12. Fairlie, p. 21.

13. Ibid.

via radio. On June 21, 1923, while on a rail tour, Harding spoke directly to the public concerning his opposition to the World Court.<sup>14</sup> The speech was eventually transmitted by stations in many parts of the country.<sup>15</sup>

Harding's successor, Calvin Coolidge, expanded the presidential use of the radio waves. In fact, Coolidge was considerably more successful than Harding in the use of radio because he had a better voice and delivery style.<sup>16</sup>

While Presidents Harding and Coolidge used a technological development, radio, to advance their positions before the public, they did little to advance the use of public affairs experts. It was not until President Herbert Hoover named George Akerson as his full-time press secretary in 1929 that an American president had a high-level public affairs official on a total, exclusive basis.<sup>17</sup> As Secretary of Commerce under both Presidents Harding and Coolidge, Hoover was responsible for electronic media regulation and also was aware of the potential power of radio. Although Akerson recommended frequent use of radio, Hoover did not enjoy public speaking.<sup>18</sup> He spoke to the nation at large on only three occasions during his four-year term.<sup>19</sup>

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14. Edward W. Chester, Radio, Television and American Politics (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 15.

15. Samuel L. Becker, "Presidential Power: The Influence of Broadcasting," Quarterly Journal of Speech 47, 1 (February 1961), p. 11.

16. Elmer E. Cornwell Jr., "Coolidge and Presidential Leadership," Public Opinion Quarterly 21, 2 (Summer 1957), p. 268.

17. Fairlie, *ibid.*

18. Becker, p. 14.

19. Chester, pp. 27-28.

While the position of public affairs advisor grew to a full-time duty at the White House during the early decades of this century, similar progress was taking place at lower levels of government as well. Perhaps the best known individual associated with public affairs activities outside of the White House during this period was George Creel, who convinced President Wilson that Creel be named chairman of a new and relatively powerful Committee on Public Information during World War I. Creel, a journalist and friend of President Wilson, assembled a talented group of public opinion experts for the committee, which was responsible for the Liberty Loan drives and other popular wartime programs.<sup>20</sup> Much of Creel's work included preparation of propaganda in favor of the American war effort abroad. His work was to continue until the Paris Peace Conference of 1981, when Republican congressmen accused Creel of planning to control American press coverage of conference proceedings.<sup>21</sup> Thus, cries of news management are not new to the United States.

Creel's most significant contribution to the growth of public affairs, however, may not have been his publicity ideas so well recognized in government and with the citizenry. Rather, it may have been the influence Creel left with some associate committee members, the publicity work that was promoted by such modern public relations pioneers as Edward Bernays, Carl Byoir, Edgar Sisson, Harvey O'Higgins and Guy Stanton Ford.<sup>22</sup>

Another example of the growth of government publicity efforts outside the White House was in 1916 when the War Department allowed reporters

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20. Cutlip and Center (1971 edition), pp. 85-87.

21. Thomas C. Sorenson, The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 6-7.

22. Cutlip and Center, *ibid.* See also Sorenson, *ibid.*, pp. 6-8.



office space within its building to cover military operations against Pancho Villa in the Southwest. Major Douglas MacArthur was assigned as press release officer on behalf of the secretary of war.<sup>23</sup> Major MacArthur's superb record notwithstanding, public affairs in government continued to be accorded tertiary status. MacArthur, for example, only was filling a temporary assignment as press officer. It would not be until many years later that a full-time civilian would fill these duties on a permanent basis.

Even the nation's first presidential press secretary, George Akerson, was described as "pompous but harmless," his most remarkable achievement having been that of conducting press conferences without allowing questions. Akerson's successor, Theodore C. Joslin, perhaps did even less for the new office. Although assuming more complex responsibilities with the growth of government reporting and of radio, Joslin was described by some as a "partisan trained seal of the Washington press corps."<sup>24</sup>

The radical reform that was characteristic of the New Deal under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, successor to President Hoover in 1933, also marked the beginning of an era of reform and growth for public affairs in the government. Most notably, this growth was not limited to Roosevelt's staff, nor a token agency or two; the growth was administration-wide. Roosevelt and press secretary Steve Early believed that promoting the broad range of programs under his New Deal required a public affairs staff never before assembled in the United States government. As such, government publicity operations experienced its greatest expansion during the Roosevelt presidency from 1933 to 1945.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Theodore F. Kopp, Weapon of Silence (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 155.

24. Fairlie, *ibid.*

25. Cutlip and Center (1971 edition), p.93.

One way Roosevelt believed he could promote his sweeping programs was to use the radio to talk directly to the people in what was to become known as his "fireside chats." As governor of New York, Roosevelt frequently spoke to citizens via radio, and as president he continued that tradition on twenty-eight occasions during his twelve-year tenure.<sup>26</sup> Roosevelt used the radio for other purposes as well, addressing local and regional audiences, for example, but his "chats" were best known. As Chester notes, Roosevelt's intention to speak to the nation via radio was to inform the public, not to sell his legislative policies.<sup>27</sup> This tactic allowed Roosevelt an image of a leader close to the people, as the people's representative in Washington and throughout the world.<sup>28</sup>

As Roosevelt stated in March 1933, his most important goal as president was to restore public confidences.<sup>29</sup> Through his shrewd use of radio as a medium between himself and the people, Roosevelt was successful enough in his goal to have been elected four times as president, twice as many as any other American in history.

The success of New Deal programs, however, cannot entirely be credited to the president's persuasive powers via radio. In Steve Early, Roosevelt had "the first real and really considerable press secretary to a President."<sup>30</sup>

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26. Waldo W. Braden and Ernest Bredenburg, "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats, "Speech Monographs 22, 5 (November 1955), p. 290.

27. Chester, p. 33.

28. Becker, pp. 15-16.

29. Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. II (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 429.

30. Fairlie, p. 22.

New Deal administrators, led in large part by Early, organized public affairs efforts toward a unified goal, that of New Deal promotion. Because many New Deal programs were agricultural in nature during the 1930s when the nation was suffering through the Great Depression, the Department of Agriculture had the largest public relations office in government, with 46 employees, by the beginning of Roosevelt's second term in 1937.<sup>31</sup>

The other public relations arena that experienced the greatest growth and reorganization was within the defense community, where General Douglas MacArthur, then Army chief of staff, encouraged formation of the Joint Army-Navy Public Relations Committee.<sup>32</sup> Such an action allowed for at least a partial public affairs unity between the sometimes feuding War and Navy Departments.

After the successes of Nazi Germany in 1939 and 1940 and then the attack by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor in 1941, it was clear that considerable focus of government public affairs efforts would be within the defense establishment during the 1940s. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson authorized a departmental bureau of public relations under the direction of Major General Robert C. Richardson in 1941.<sup>33</sup> The Navy Department also established such an operation, an office of public relations, directly under Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, during the same period.<sup>34</sup>

This duality of defense release points, those at War and the Navy

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31. McCamy, p. 167.

32. Christy, p. 34.

33. McNamara, p. 31.

34. Ibid, p. 32.

Departments, seemed to further indicate the need for a single point of release within the defense community. Although Presidents Roosevelt and then Harry S. Truman, through White House press secretaries Stephen Early and then Charles Ross, provided the point of contact for the most important news, the day-to-day news releases of defense happenings on land, sea and in the air were, in some cases, disjointed. Occasionally, reports from War and Navy did not agree at all.<sup>35</sup>

The postwar years saw a drive by many government officials for the unification of the armed services under a single secretary. There clearly was a need for integrated policies and procedures for all departments and agencies connected with any future defense efforts; furthermore, the growth of air power dictated the need for a distinct service arm for what previously comprised the air corps of the United States Army.<sup>36</sup>

After considerable debate between the War and Navy Departments, the National Security Act of 1947 became Public Law 253 of the United States. The effective date was September 17, 1947, when Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal was sworn in as the first secretary of defense and head of the newly minted National Military Establishment.<sup>37</sup>

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35. Interview with Daniel Z. Henkin, Washington, D.C., July 27, 1978. Henkin, later to become as an assistant secretary of defense for public affairs himself, was a Pentagon beat reporter from the administrations from Franklin Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson.

36. For a review of how President Truman approached the issue of service unification, see Harry S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope Vol. II (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1959), chapter four. Also see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, S. 84, A Bill to Provide for a Department of Armed Forces, Secretary of the Armed Forces, Undersecretaries of Army, Navy, and Air, For Other Purposes (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945).

37. Christy, p. 52.

Forrestal's mission to unify sometimes bitterly divided Army and Navy elements with the new Air Force was almost an impossible task, and a matter that some speculate led to Forrestal's suicide on March 27, 1949. His efforts within the public affairs arena generally were slightly more successful than in other areas in terms of interservice acceptance.

Forrestal believed that he should hire a prominent civilian journalist to serve as his press officer in order to unify defense information. Until he was able to find such a person, the new defense secretary called on his former public relations advisor from the Navy department, Captain Robert W. Berry. Forrestal finally persuaded Harold B. Hinton, a distinguished reporter from the New York Times, to accept the ranking publicity post.<sup>38</sup> However, Hinton accepted only on the condition that the appointment be temporary, for a period of one year.<sup>39</sup> He assumed the directorship of the newly created office of public information on July 19, 1948.

Although Hinton certainly was respected amongst the press corps covering the new National Military Establishment and was a more credible source to reporters than uniformed service members of earlier days, Hinton's role as a temporary appointee still left reporters with the feeling that the government did not believe press relations to be important. Hinton's replacement, William Frye, was to remain in office an even shorter period--less than one year--and then the duties were uncerimoniously passed to,

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38. George Vernon Underwood Jr., "The Washington Military Correspondents," (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1960), p.23. Also see Leonard S. Rodberg and Derek Shearer, The Pentagon Watchers (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1970), p. 47, for more insight into the birth and development of this office.

39. Interview with Mrs. Harold Hinton, Washington, D.C., June 30, 1978.

of all people, the Department of Defense general counsel, Marx Leva, during 1950. Leva admitted to having "absolutely no experience" with public affairs activities at the time of his appointment and admitted that the function at that time remained a nuisance of sorts and an additional duty.<sup>40</sup>

As the Korean War developed during the early 1950s, Clayton Fritchey and later Andrew Berding served brief terms as directors of the office of public information. Their duties remained rather minor. If any substantive news was to be issued, it was to come from the secretary of defense, George C. Marshall or later Robert A. Lovett, if not directly from the White House.<sup>41</sup>

Most public information responsibility during the presidency of Harry S. Truman was left to Truman himself or to someone immediately subordinate to him such as press secretary Ross. Quick of wit and occasionally salty of the tongue, Truman was not the radio performer that Roosevelt was, but he improved somewhat with the aid of one of the earliest presidential media advisors, Leonard Reinsch.<sup>42</sup> During Truman's presidency, television began to replace radio as the dominant electronic medium. Truman first broadcast a message from the White House via television on October 5, 1947.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>. Interview with Marx Leva, Washington, D.C., June 18, 1978.

<sup>41</sup>. Interview with Andrew Berding, Washington, D.C., July 30, 1978. He was ranking Department of Defense publicist from July 1, 1952 to November 22, 1953.

<sup>42</sup>. Chester, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup>. Ibid.

As Cornwell suggests, however, Truman was unable to realize the advantage of the visual medium and generally used television the way he used radio. He rarely looked into the camera, content to simply read from his prepared text.<sup>44</sup>

By the time Truman turned over the government to Dwight D. Eisenhower early in 1953, television clearly had taken the position of the major electronic medium. This meant that even more reporters were covering government affairs, as network correspondents for television joined their radio and print colleagues in increasing numbers.

Perhaps equally significant to the growth of television during the Eisenhower administration was the former general's choice for his press secretary, James Hagerty. Hagerty was a key advisor to Eisenhower in areas even outside public affairs--a "surrogate vice president" as some later were to call him--and probably was the first publicist in government to break McCamy's description of the government publicist as merely a presidential tool.

Through the advice of Hagerty, Eisenhower was the first president to speak directly to the people through a news conference. Although the filmed broadcasts of Eisenhower's conferences were to be approved by Hagerty before being aired later,<sup>45</sup> this nonetheless represented another significant step in the development of mass media usage for political purposes. Unlike Franklin Roosevelt and later Truman, who called reporters into their offices for informal question and answer periods, (Roosevelt more than Truman, who used the Indian Treaty Room outside the White House)

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<sup>44</sup>. Cornwell, Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 267.

<sup>45</sup>. Harry W. Sharp Jr., "The Kennedy News Conference," (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1967), p. 56.

Eisenhower adopted a more formal procedure to accomodate the growing number of reporters, some of whom brought bulky television equipment. The first formal, albeit tape-delayed, television broadcast of an Eisenhower press conference took place on January 19, 1955.<sup>46</sup>

Although Hagerty and his staff were to approve final broadcasting of Eisenhower's remarks, the president nonetheless remained cautious before the press. He attempted to speak in general terms, focusing upon ideas rather than specific facts.<sup>47</sup> Many reporters accused the president of being too vague, but Eisenhower's image was supplemented admirably by aide Hagerty who often added interpretive information to the press. As an additional safeguard, Eisenhower hired an experienced actor and television producer, Robert Montgomery, as the first formal "television advisor" in presidential history.<sup>48</sup> Clearly, political public relations were growing more sophisticated with the growth of the mass media, and the notion of a single publicity advisor employed in other capacities to fill a work day was long past at the White House.

During Eisenhower's first term Hagerty remained a key advisor to the president, perhaps even more important and influential advisor than Early was to Roosevelt. Eisenhower, however, remained spokesman to the people. Then in 1957 while Congress was not in session and the president was on vacation at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the Soviet Union launched the first

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<sup>46</sup>. David P. Woods, "The Presidential Press Conference Under JFK: An Instrument for Leadership," (Master's thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1964), p. 46.

<sup>47</sup>. Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for a Change, 1953-1956 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1963), pp. 232-233.

<sup>48</sup>. Luther Wayne Sanders, "A Content Analysis of President Kennedy's First Six Press Conferences," (Master's thesis, Ohio University, 1962), p. 11.



satellite, the Sputnik, into space. Hagerty, the only key figure in Washington at the time, served as the American representative before the press and assumed a limelight never experienced by a public affairs official before.<sup>49</sup> As Eisenhower continued to suffer from heart problems during the late 1950s, Hagerty was told by the president to "take over." Some observers took this instruction broadly and assumed that a press secretary, Jim Hagerty, was running the country.<sup>50</sup>

The fact that a press secretary had assumed such responsibility was remarkable enough, but Eisenhower's implicit remarks concerning the radio and television industry during his farewell address further suggested the changes in the relationship of the news media to the government. The outgoing president expressed his gratitude to the radio and television networks--never mentioning the print media--in the opportunities they had given him to bring information before the people.<sup>51</sup> Thus, it had appeared that the president's attention increasingly was geared toward broadcasting.

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49. Robert A. Rutland, "President Eisenhower and His Press Secretary," Journalism Quarterly 34, 4 (Fall 1957), p. 452.

50. Jerry Warden Friedheim, "Presidential Press Secretaries," (Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1962), p. 48. Friedheim eventually was to become a press secretary himself, serving as assistant secretary of defense for public affairs in 1973 and 1974 after some four years as deputy to Daniel Z. Henkin.

51. James E. Pollard, "Eisenhower and the Press: The Final Phase," Journalism Quarterly 38, 2 (Winter 1961), p. 182.

At the Department of Defense, Eisenhower called on Charles E. Wilson to become the nation's fifth secretary. This appointment allowed an opportunity for public relations within this cabinet office a greater degree of prestige, for Wilson, an executive in the private sector before his nomination, envisioned that the best way to run the huge department was to name "more vice presidents,"<sup>52</sup> or assistant secretaries of defense.

One such secretarial assistant was Frederick A. Seaton, who late in 1953 assumed the position of assistant secretary of defense (legislative and public affairs), one of the new posts within the department. It soon became clear, however, that Seaton was to have little if indeed anything to do with public affairs. His interest largely was directed to the legislative arena, toward monitoring his former colleagues with whom he previously served on Capitol Hill, and then reporting to Secretary Wilson on congressional support for defense programs. Publicity work was handled by lower-ranking civil servants. The only personnel with any authority of note remained in the uniformed services, which kept most public affairs personnel within the respective departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Public affairs at the Department of Defense level continued to be accorded a rather low status when Robert Tripp Ross followed Seaton, who was to become Secretary of the interior, on March 15, 1955. Ross, too, was primarily a legislative affairs expert. The Pentagon press corps continued to work with lower-ranking civil servants when unable to see the secretary of defense, or they went to the various services for information. Thus,

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52. Interview with Leva, *ibid.* Leva was one of Secretary Forrestal's first three assistant secretaries in 1947. During most of 1950, while general counsel for Secretaries Louis Johnson and then George C. Marshall, Leva also served as the chief public affairs official. He generally left public affairs duties to the operator level.

the Department of Defense office of public information served mainly as "a referral agency and a clearance house" for information seekers.<sup>53</sup>

As the scare of world communism gripped the United States during the 1950s, there surfaced an increasing desire to stifle possible "leaks" of information from the Pentagon that might help cold war foes. Thus, the role of security review grew during the 1950s, a role assumed by public affairs personnel, and directed by the first assistant secretary whose sole duty was for public affairs, Murray Snyder.

Snyder assumed his position under difficult times. Eisenhower and his aides were increasingly concerned about the lack of order in the Pentagon publicity apparatus during the early and middle 1950s. The press and Pentagon were at such odds that R. Karl Honaman, deputy assistant secretary for public affairs to Robert Tripp Ross, resigned his post in the wake of heavy press criticism in 1955 that Honaman was withholding information from the people.<sup>54</sup> In his letter of farewell to Honaman, Secretary Wilson praised his press aide for the "substantial contribution to our public information program," implicitly blaming the Pentagon press corps for the fact that Honaman was "misunderstood."<sup>55</sup>

Less than two years after Honaman's resignation, Ross, Snyder's predecessor, also was forced to resign. There was the hint of a scandal in Ross' career, and combined with increasing congressional criticism of his legislative affairs performance, he left office on February 20, 1957.<sup>56</sup> As

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53. Cutlip and Center (1952 edition), p. 423.

54. The New York Times, December 10, 1955.

55. Letter, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson to R. Karl Honaman, deputy assistant secretary of defense (public affairs), December 7, 1955.

56. The Baltimore Sun, February 21, 1957.

veteran Pentagon observer Mark Watson noted at the time, public affairs and legislative affairs activities had become "uneasy companions" under the direction of Ross. A splitting of the office seemed assured.<sup>57</sup>

It was obvious that Pentagon public affairs needed a distinct boost in credibility. It also seemed evident that the White House needed to be reasonably certain of the successor's harmony with presidential wishes. The choice was easy. At the urging of Hagerty, President Eisenhower--apparently without prior approval of the secretary of defense--named deputy White House press secretary Snyder to take control of the unraveling publicity affairs of the Pentagon. The White House apparently believed that Pentagon thinking on information policy was too liberal, and the loyal Snyder was the best choice to keep matters under control.<sup>58</sup>

There was some optimism in Congress that the Department of Defense finally had attracted an individual who, with sixteen years in the newspaper business, would improve defense-press-corps relations. It was also hoped that Snyder could organize the various defense public affairs efforts into a single, effective office rather than one who would infuriate the Congress or the press, or both, and submit a hurried resignation under pressure.<sup>59</sup> But in his nomination testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Snyder hinted that he would not become a confidant of any reporters, suggesting his fear of news leaks and unfair advantages.<sup>60</sup>

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57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Nominations, 85th Congress, 1st sess., March 7, 1957, p. 26.

60. Ibid., p. 19.

Snyder's professional credentials, though not overwhelmingly impressive, nonetheless were considerably better than most of his predecessors. He was a political reporter for the Brooklyn (N.Y.) Eagle and the New York Post, later a statehouse reporter for the New York Herald-Tribune, before joining the White House press staff during the Eisenhower administration.<sup>61</sup>

One of Snyder's immediate goals as the first assistant secretary for public affairs was to follow Secretary Forrestal's dream of uniting public information functions under one office. Snyder, however, lacked the confidence of Secretary of Defense Wilson and later Neil H. McElroy. Since Wilson and McElroy had little choice in selecting Snyder as their spokesman, they implicitly allowed the services to operate their public information organizations almost independently of Snyder's office.<sup>62</sup> The ranking service chiefs of information had such a slight regard for Snyder's authority in the Pentagon that they sometimes sent such low-ranking representatives as captains and majors as their representatives during the assistant secretary's policy briefings.<sup>63</sup> Congressmen also supported the services' independence from the authority of Snyder.<sup>64</sup>

President Eisenhower could not afford to witness another resignation in the Pentagon. He included in his message to Congress on April 3, 1958, a direct command that Pentagon information activities be brought under Snyder's control:

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61. The Washington Star, November 4, 1969. This report was the announcement of Snyder's death.

62. McNamara, p. 75.

63. Army-Navy-Air Force Journal, November 16, 1957.

64. Gene M. Lyons, "PR and the Pentagon," The New Leader 43 (October 17, 1960), p. 11.

I have directed the Secretary of Defense to review the numbers as well as the directives of personnel of the various military departments who engage in legislative liaison and public affairs activities in the Washington area. I have requested that he act, without impeding the flow of information to the Congress or the public, to strengthen Defense Department supervision over these activities and to move such of these personnel and activities as necessary into the Office of the Secretary of Defense.<sup>65</sup>

Secretary of Defense McElroy soon issued a memorandum to the service secretaries instructing them to follow the president's wishes,<sup>66</sup> but as time passed and the services negotiated to keep their own staffs, it was clear that there would continue to be little order within the Pentagon information community. As Pentagon aide O. L. Nelson noted, the public affairs reorganization ordered by Eisenhower "achieved little or nothing" to change the information process.<sup>67</sup> The public affairs arena was reflective of ways in which the services resisted unification efforts in general, of course, but because it perhaps is the most public Pentagon office, the issue of public affairs unity continued to find its way before the Congress and into the press.

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65. Vol. 104, Congressional Record, 6259 (1958), p. 12. Also see U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, Availability of Information From Federal Departments and Agencies, Department of Defense (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958), p. 146.

66. The Baltimore Sun, May 28, 1958. Also see Neil H. McElroy, Public Affairs Activities of the Department of Defense, Memorandum for the Service Secretaries and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, June 11, 1958).

67. O. L. Nelson, Comments on Progress in Reorganizing Public Affairs, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, June 12, 1958).

By late 1958 some progress had been realized when Secretary McElroy succeeded in placing information activities of the outlying unified commands under Snyder's control. This served as somewhat of a victory for President Eisenhower who wrote to McElroy:

Stronger supervision and control by the Secretary of Defense over public affairs throughout the defense establishment have been a major goal in the reorganization plan. Because of their great importance in the effective execution of national defense programs, public affairs activities are today a major command responsibility. I look to the major commanders to insure that public affairs activities throughout all echelons of their commands properly reflect our national aims and objectives.<sup>68</sup>

Yet Snyder remained with little power over information functions in the Pentagon. Although the small public affairs staffs of the unified commands reported to Snyder, the large single service operational staffs continued to work with the service chiefs of information.<sup>69</sup>

Secretary McElroy continued to press forward in support of Snyder, but little progress was realized. In February 1959, McElroy issued a new public affairs charter outlining Snyder's duties.<sup>70</sup> Finally, Snyder had assumed an authority of control over all information activities of the services, but it was only to work against him. Indeed, the charter only reinforced attitudes from the press that Snyder was controlling the flow of military information throughout the world.

Snyder had contended early in his tenure that, "All legitimate news of the Pentagon is available to the press...In fact, on my entry into the

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68. Letter, President Dwight D. Eisenhower to Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy, January 12, 1959.

69. McNamara, p. 87.

70. Neil H. McElroy, Department of Defense Directive 5122.5, Charter for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, D.C., Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 27, 1959.

Department of Defense, I was amazed at the amount of information which is available to the press."<sup>71</sup>

The press corps did not agree, most reporters reputedly responding with a "long, loud, and unanimous hoot of derision."<sup>72</sup> Time magazine, in its March 2, 1959 issue, referred to Snyder as "one of the most contentious figures in Washington," adding that newsmen dealing with him "are close to unanimous in the opinion that he stands as a major obstacle in the way of sensible and constructive reporting of the U.S. defense posture."<sup>73</sup> Snyder apparently was insensitive to press remarks. Some reporters did not speak to him for months, while those who did were audited by a Snyder aide during press interviews with various Department of Defense employees.<sup>74</sup>

Snyder's battle was not confined to the press corps, nor to the services. During the late 1950s until his departure in 1961 he was sharply criticized by Rep. John Moss, chairman of the House Freedom of Information subcommittee. Moss frequently charged Snyder with failure to disclose necessary information to the public, thereby denying the citizenry their constitutional rights. In one such attack, on April 23, 1960, Moss called Snyder a "czar," a man intent upon abridging the democratic right of free speech.<sup>75</sup>

Criticism during Snyder's full year, 1960, had reached a peak.

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71. Christy, p. 72.

72. Ibid, p. 73.

73. Time, March 2, 1959, p. 46.

74. Ibid.

75. Associated Press news release, April 23, 1960.



A new secretary of defense, Thomas S. Gates Jr., was given little opportunity but to accept the Snyder incumbency late in 1959, and Gates generally ignored his assistant secretary.<sup>76</sup> No longer did reporters only attack the assistant secretary for withholding information; Snyder's staff also was the object of complaints about its incompetence.<sup>77</sup> Such policy moves as the earmarking of information as "not classified but not releasable" and the placing of all defense contractor advertising under Snyder's direct control for policy clearance indicated to observers even more conclusively that it was time for a change of assistant secretaries of defense for public affairs.

Snyder was not entirely the villain that the press, Rep. Moss and the services might wish others to believe, however. In June 1960, for example, Snyder was able to push through a continuing program for the declassification and downgrading of defense documents.<sup>78</sup> And, despite the protestations, of the services, he managed to begin to unite public affairs activities in a huge, seemingly unmanageable bureaucracy known as the Department of Defense.

Three reasons might be offered here why Snyder was not destined to advance defense public affairs further, however.

First, he was not a selectee of any of his immediate superiors. Snyder served three secretaries, Charles Wilson, Neil McElroy and Thomas Gates, as well as he might have, but he could not expect to assume a level of confidence

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76. Interview with Arthur Sylvester, Cold Spring, N.Y., August 8, 1978. Discussions with Department of Defense historians seem to support this view.

77. Missiles and Rockets, May 2, 1960, p. 4.

78. McNamara, p. 88. Also see Department of Defense Directive 5230.9, Section IV, Security and Policy Review, Washington, D.C., Office of the Secretary of Defense, August 17, 1957, for an earlier attempt toward this goal.

and support that a hand-picked candidate might attract. Here, President Eisenhower failed to significantly improve defense public affairs matters through his usurping the right of the secretary of defense to select, or at least enthusiastically approve as had Robert S. McNamara of Sylvester, a publicist who would theoretically work directly for the secretary.

Second, Snyder seemed to be somewhat insensitive to the desires and to some needs of the press. He was rather aloof, despite having been a former reporter himself. His suspicious use of a third-party monitor of his interviews with reporters seems to confirm his mistrust of the Pentagon press corps.

Finally, in the face of heated service protests to resist the unification of information activities, Snyder may have overreacted. He may have pressured the services too much and limited the flow of information too much. In an attempt to plug leaks he may have broken the entire dam resulting in protests from all corners.

As suggested, Snyder ultimately failed before the press, the services, some members of Congress, and in his image before much of the American public.

CHAPTER III  
POLICY CHANGES DURING THE NEW FRONTIER

As suggested in Chapter II, there were at least two reasons why more government publicists did not assume broader responsibilities until 1961. First, their superiors in most cases did not attach much importance to the function of public relations vis-a-vis other operational areas of government. As a result, public relations policy frequently was created as circumstances warranted in a kind of knee-jerk fashion.

Second, many early government publicists simply did not have the ability, the opportunity or the desire to assume policymaking functions. For example, some publicists attempted to establish certain policies only to retreat from their positions due to lack of support from their superiors or the press, or both.

The status quo thus was the rule within many public affairs departments. As political scientist J.A.R. Pimlott notes, there are essentially three ways a publicist can be employed in government: 1) purely as a technician, such as in the case of most lower-ranking personnel who specialize in a particular area; 2) as a technician with some awareness of, and perhaps input into, the administration's policies, such as respected public affairs advisor Harold B. Hinton; and 3) as a policymaker.<sup>1</sup> With the possible exception of James Hagerty and perhaps, in a more limited sense, Steve Early, the United States in 1960 had seen publicists employed exclusively in the first two categories. And, as seen in the cases of Marx Leva, Fred Seaton and Robert Tripp Ross, some public affairs supervisors virtually ignored all of their duties.

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1. J.A.R. Pimlott, Public Relations and American Democracy (Princeton, N.J.: University Press, 1951), p. 17.

The changing role of the public affairs officer during the Kennedy administration is largely a result of the president's personal background. Even before World War II was to take him into the United States Navy, John Kennedy had a fond affection for journalism. He worked briefly in that field in 1941.<sup>2</sup> Then, immediately after serving as a naval officer during the war, Kennedy accepted an opportunity from his father's friend, William Randolph Hearst, to serve as a reporter covering the British elections of 1945 in which Sir Winston Churchill was defeated in his bid to remain as prime minister.<sup>3</sup>

Although the lure of politics would take him away from journalism as a full-time vocation, Kennedy continued in the post-war years to write whenever possible. He had a great admiration for Peter Zenger, the 18th century German newspaper editor who was critical of government, and, as noted Kennedy biographer and speechwriter Theodore C. Sorenson was to suggest later, Kennedy possessed a talent as a writer or reporter equalled by few presidents before him.<sup>4</sup> His postwar book, Why England Slept, was widely acclaimed. Later, as a senator from Massachusetts, Kennedy frequently wrote magazine articles and in 1957, for Profiles in Courage, won the Pulitzer Prize for biography.<sup>5</sup>

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2. Theodore C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 16.

3. Arthur Krock, recorded interview by Charles Bartlett, May 10, 1964, p. 12 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass. Also see Winston S. Churchill, Memoirs of the Second World War (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1959), pp. 990-991, for more details about the elections.

4. Sorenson, p. 3.

5. Ibid, pp. 66-70.

Perhaps equally important during his pre-presidential years was Kennedy's remarkable sense of history. He was a scholar and a critic of history. His regard for the importance of historical evidence during his administration was to become apparent later.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, as Kennedy began to become more well-known in political circles, his affection for the press became equally well-known. As long-time political correspondent for the Washington Star, Mary McGrory, recalled of his 1952 bid for the United States Senate, reporters showed an affection in turn. Although the term "charisma" had not yet been identified with the boyish-looking campaigner, McGrory remembered the early Kennedy image, "... it was his whole aura. It was his appearance; it was his manner..."<sup>7</sup>

Although he possessed a suave image to the press and the people, Kennedy differed from some of his colleagues in that he handled much of his own publicity as congressman and senator. When he decided to run for the presidency late in 1959, Kennedy was convinced that he must appoint a full-time press secretary. His choice was Pierre Salinger, a former reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle and Collier's before serving as an investigator on the staff of brother Robert Kennedy in 1957.<sup>8</sup>

Salinger, a loyal press aide, recognized Kennedy's polished manner with reporters. He knew that his candidate only stood to gain through publicity. He supported Kennedy's television appearances, and he hired a Washington

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6. Ibid, pp. 3-4.

7. Mary McGrory, recorded interviews as part of a press panel by Fred Holborn, August 8, 1964, p. 6 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

8. Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 18-28.

stenographic service to provide an instant transcript of Kennedy speeches to the press.<sup>9</sup>

As Kennedy was to tell Salinger later, it was television that assured a narrow Democratic victory, stating flatly, "We wouldn't have had a prayer without that gadget."<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps Kennedy was best known for his televised debates during the 1960 campaign. He appeared to be the victor over Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey during the West Virginia Democratic primary campaign debate,<sup>11</sup> then clearly outclassed a haggard-looking Republican challenger in Vice President Richard M. Nixon that fall.<sup>12</sup> As Sorenson remembers, the press continued to lavish praise on Kennedy:

But his unusual accessibility to reporters, his frank and friendly talks with the, his growing confidence, and the excitement generated by his crowds after the first television debate, all contributed to their growing respect for Kennedy and for their glowing dispatches back home. There was, moreover, an atmosphere of conviviality in the Kennedy press entourage, encouraged by Salinger's efficient arrangements.....

Even after being elected president, Kennedy continued to woo and flatter reporters with considerable vigor. For example, when the leader of France, General Charles de Gaulle, had given a congratulatory party for Kennedy at Elysee Palace, the new president reportedly pulled a reporter, George Herman of CBS News, into the formal receiving line to meet the host. De Gaulle did not share Kennedy's regard for reporters at least in this instance. He was said to have looked nauseated, "as though he had just

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9. Ibid., p. 32.

10. Ibid, p. 54.

11. Sorenson, pp. 140-141.

12. Ibid, pp. 196-203.

13. Ibid, p. 186.

shaken hands with a reptile of some kind."<sup>14</sup>

As president, Kennedy was to use television to an advantage unknown at that time. He was ideally suited to charm his way into American living rooms, and he knew it. There was little argument when Pierre Salinger suggested he be the first president in history to open the press conference to live television.<sup>15</sup> In fact, Kennedy was the first leader in the world to do so.<sup>16</sup> Although other aides advised against the move, Kennedy felt he could learn a lesson from Franklin Roosevelt's "fireside chats" by taking his position, via live television as well as radio, directly to the people. He agreed to the idea on December 27, 1960.<sup>17</sup>

As Kennedy noted during his first such television press conferences in the spacious State Department Auditorium on January 25, 1961, the system of live television had "the advantage of providing more direct communication."<sup>18</sup> It became apparent to many reporters that Kennedy was using reporters merely as actors. He often looked above the gathering of the press to the television cameras highly placed in the auditorium. As Peter Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News suggests, the press "became spear carriers in a great televised opera. We were props in a show, in a performance."<sup>19</sup> Kennedy allowed television sound crews to follow him, and press conferences were arranged

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14. McGrory, p. 35.

15. Salinger, p. 53.

16. Ibid, p. 54.

17. Ibid, p. 56.

18. Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, Presidential Press Conference, January 25, 1961, p. 10.

19. Peter Lisagor, press panel, p. 53.

and lighted purely for the sake of the visual medium.<sup>20</sup>

During the following year, Kennedy expanded his visual impact upon America when he agreed to participate in a program known as "A Conversation with the President," which was simultaneously shown on all three networks on December 16, 1962. Producer Fred Friendly, who was an initiator of a less formalized idea of presenting the president before television audiences, marveled, "....a President of the United States used television better than it had ever been used before."<sup>21</sup> Later, the First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, was to offer a televised tour of the White House, another innovative and highly popular use of the medium.

Clearly, there was a distinct shift in media use from the Eisenhower to the Kennedy administrations. While Eisenhower remained protected by the final publication or broadcast authority of press secretary Jim Hagerty, Kennedy largely served as his own press secretary.<sup>22</sup> Even Salinger agrees to this point, comparing Kennedy's public relations savvy only with Franklin D. Roosevelt among American presidents.<sup>23</sup>

Critics disagree over Salinger's role in the administration. Although he enjoyed the full confidence of the president and he was instrumental in unifying public information efforts throughout the Executive Branch through frequent contacts and meetings with his cabinet level counterparts, many

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20. Ibid, p. 52. Also see Salinger, p. 140.

21. Fred Friendly, Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control (New York: Knopf; 1967), p. 147.

22. Charles Roberts, recorded interview by Charles Morissey, April 11, 1966, p. 34 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

23. Salinger, p. 73.



felt that Kennedy assumed too much of the responsibility that might have been Salinger's. While Kennedy historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. particularly applauded Salinger's use of a briefing team to prepare the president for his upcoming press conferences and for his creativity and imagination,<sup>24</sup> others accused Salinger of not only not taking part in White House policy but also of not knowing what the policy was.<sup>25</sup>

Salinger also was connected with occasionally sloppy work, allowing such matters as misspelled names creep into press releases.<sup>26</sup> Although with Kennedy early in his bid for the presidency, Salinger "was sort of a peripheral guy...he didn't grow up with the group; and he didn't have the same long background of being one of the clan." He was regarded more as a publicity advance man concerned with detail work than as a public relations expert.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps it is important to note here that a formal job description of presidential press secretary remained unwritten. Such individuals usually had served as publicity extensions of the presidents. While Salinger served an important role in his relations with other government publicists,<sup>28</sup> his duties and functions with the press were relatively minor. One veteran reporter, Peter Lisagor, referred to him as an "amiable...waterboy."<sup>29</sup>

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24. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., A Thousand Days (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1965), p. 716.

25. Lester Tanzer (ed.), The Kennedy Circle (Washington: Luce, 1961), p. 60. Also see Lisagor, press panel, p. 69.

26. Tanzer, p. 61.

27. Ernest G. Warren, recorded interview by Larry J. Hackman, February 29, 1968, p. 23 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

28. Salinger, p. 72.

29. Lisagor, press panel, p. 79.

What is critical to this study was Kennedy's reliance upon his staff at the Pentagon. Kennedy named Robert S. McNamara, president of Ford Motor Company, to be secretary of defense. McNamara quickly and clearly became "the star and the strong man" among the Kennedy newcomers.<sup>30</sup>

Kennedy's confidence in McNamara was virtually total and unwavering. As a result, the defense establishment assumed a broader role in the government, taking increasing responsibility in such areas as civil defense, the space effort, intelligence, paramilitary operations, foreign aid, and even foreign policy in general. This was in part due to the tremendous talent assembled by McNamara and Kennedy talent scouts. The "Whiz Kids," as the McNamara team was to become known, may have been among the best of any department in the history of the nation.<sup>31</sup>

But while observers were to call Kennedy "perhaps the most public relations-minded president,"<sup>32</sup> McNamara's credentials and experiences as an automobile executive reflected little more than a passing expertise in publicity matters. McNamara apparently did not have a candidate for an assistant secretary for public affairs in mind, and so Kennedy recruited for the job. Kennedy's first choice was Elie Abel. McNamara had contacted the widely respected reporter, but Abel immediately was instructed to see the president if he wanted more information.<sup>33</sup> Meeting Kennedy in Palm

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30. Sorenson, p. 269.

31. Ibid. Also see David Halberstam, The Best and Brightest (New York: Random House, 1969), for a more complete evaluation.

32. Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 115.

33. Elie Abel, recorded interview by Dennis J. O'Brien, March 18, 1970, p. 8 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

Beach, Abel was offered his choice of the top publicity jobs within the Departments of Defense or State. He rejected both of them, telling Kennedy he could not afford a cut in his salary and that he was afraid he might be unable to return to journalism after working for the government.<sup>34</sup>

Kennedy countered the refusal with a proposal designed to entice Abel's traveling companion on many press trips, Arthur Sylvester, of the Newark News Washington bureau: "Well, if you won't take it, how about 'Ahtah'?" Abel immediately reached Sylvester by telephone, but Sylvester was disinterested in the opportunity.<sup>35</sup>

The president would not give up so easily. He instructed McNamara to meet Sylvester in New York merely to discuss other candidates and publicity programs Sylvester might endorse as a reporter. Or so Sylvester thought. During their airport meeting it became clear that McNamara, and Kennedy, wanted Sylvester to work for them.<sup>36</sup> Clearly, Kennedy placed considerable importance upon the job of ranking Pentagon publicist. While Salinger was responsible for a \$150,000 operation at the White House, Sylvester was to assume a thirty million dollar worldwide publicity department. Kennedy wanted a strong individual to see to it that this operation was finally unified.

Sylvester later recalled in an interview that he requested three prerequisites before accepting McNamara's offer. First, he and McNamara were to be on a first-name basis. Second, he was to enjoy the opportunity

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34. Ibid., p. 10.

35. Ibid., p. 12.

36. Interview with Arthur Sylvester, Cold Spring, New York, August 8, 1978.

to see the secretary at any time necessary and without coordination of mediators. And third, McNamara must place his total, full trust and confidence in Sylvester's efforts. Secrets were not to be kept from the public affairs office. McNamara agreed to the conditions. "Okay, Bob, I accept," was Sylvester's reply.<sup>37</sup>

What Sylvester probably did not expect was his access to the president himself. He and President Kennedy were in frequent direct contact. In fact, Sylvester perhaps may have been Kennedy's closest sub-cabinet source. The president often called Sylvester on the telephone to check the accuracy of information or to find out how certain reports managed to find their way into the news.<sup>38</sup> Sylvester often contacted the president directly as well, usually by letter or memorandum.<sup>39</sup> His only requirement was to inform Secretary of Defense McNamara after any such communication.<sup>40</sup>

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37. Ibid. Also see recorded interview Sylvester with Sheldon Stern, New York City, August 2, 1977, Columbia University oral history collection, New York, p. 18 of manuscript.

38. Solis Horwitz, recorded interview by Joseph E. O'Connor, March 18, 1966, p. 22 a of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass. Sylvester confirmed this point in his interview with me at Cold Spring.

39. An example of this is a letter from Sylvester to Kennedy dated April 7, 1962, in which Sylvester explained television filming of activities in South Vietnam. From the White House Central Files, John F. Kennedy Library, Dorchester, Mass. No documents from sub-cabinet officials other than Sylvester were found in a limited search of this file, but it probably would be unlikely that Sylvester was the only official at his level to correspond directly to the president. The frequency of such communication perhaps was more noteworthy.

40. Sylvester interview, ibid.

Although part of this direct communications was due to the importance President Kennedy placed upon defense publicity and possibly in part due to a suspicion some believe that Kennedy perhaps felt Sylvester was more competent than Salinger, Sylvester also was among the most cooperative members of the entire Executive Branch. It was Sylvester, for example, who alerted Kennedy through Salinger to American nuclear testing near Soviet borders in Alaska. Although the testing had been continuing for some time, Kennedy was unaware of it. The testing was halted immediately.<sup>41</sup>

Sylvester attempted to keep a continuing dialogue with the president in other ways as well. Sometimes Salinger would intercept Sylvester's attempts. For example, Salinger rejected Sylvester's bid to add a Sylvester statement concerning the resumption of atmospheric testing run by the joint task force of the Department of Defense.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps jealous of Sylvester's stature within the White House but perhaps justified in their observations, others did not agree that the former Newark News reporter deserved such attention. McNamara's deputy, Roswell L. Gilpatrick, saw Sylvester's operation as one of the weaker segments of the department.<sup>43</sup> David Halberstam agreed, questioning Sylvester's sophistication and ability.<sup>44</sup> Yet both critics admitted that Sylvester

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<sup>41</sup>. Salinger, p. 137.

<sup>42</sup>. Memorandum, Christine Camp to Pierre Salinger, November 21, 1961. Presidential Office Files, Box 65, John F. Kennedy Library, Dorchester, Mass.

<sup>43</sup>. Roswell L. Gilpatrick, recorded interview by Dennis J. O'Brien, May 5, 1970, p. 113 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

<sup>44</sup>. Halberstam, p. 214.

continued to receive the unwavering support of McNamara, and this, coupled with the confidence of President Kennedy, at least partially serves to explain the Sylvester clout during times of confrontation later.

The new president in early addresses reflected his concern for a stronger government-press interchange throughout the administration. While he supported the policy of a "free flow" of information, Kennedy placed much of the burden on the press and not exclusively the government, asking editors and publishers to "reexamine their own responsibilities."<sup>45</sup> He further insisted that the government speak only with one voice,<sup>46</sup> which, as noted, was a challenging undertaking in such a large nation.

Just as Murray Snyder experienced difficulties in his attempt to issue defense information from a central source, so did Sylvester. Perhaps the most flagrant abuse of government information policies came from senior generals and admirals, many of whom had voiced personal opinions about government policy without serious check. Some, such as General Maxwell Taylor and Admiral Arleigh Burke, warned of a communist domination of the world and accused political leaders of being "too soft" toward the Soviet Union and Red China.

Indeed, this was a problem for every key Pentagon figure since the unification in 1947. The secretary of defense and his public affairs subordinates through the years simply could not control the services. Snyder attempted some control during the late 1950s, but was forced to

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<sup>45</sup>. Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, Address, "The President and the Press," before the American Newspaper Publishers Association, New York City, April 27, 1961, p. 337.

<sup>46</sup>. "Information Policy Considerations," Office of the Presidential Press Secretary, April 5, 1961.

retreat amid criticism from many corners. The unification that Secretary of Defense James Forrestal had worked for so diligently in 1947 was, in many ways related to public affairs, as elusive in 1961 as it had been more than a decade earlier.

It was clear on January 18, 1961, that the issue was on the mind of some members of Congress as well as President-elect Kennedy. During the nomination hearing for Assistant Secretary of Defense-designate Sylvester, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Richard B. Russell (Democrat-Georgia) stated:

...Not only does the Department of Defense have an (information) office of this kind, but the other three (military) departments have one. And that has caused me considerable concern. I think all the information over there ought to come out of the same place. It has caused some confusion in the past. I think the people in the other departments ought to be transferred to your office, or else they should have direct responsibility. I hope that you will take a very firm grasp of public relations, and that Mr. McNamara will support you to see if we cannot do a little centralizing on the public relations and news issuing facilities of the department.<sup>47</sup>

In response to Senator Russell's observation of this continuing problem, Sylvester replied:

One of Mr. McNamara's discussions with me has borne on that, and that is one of his hopes. And with your views on it, it is a great backstop also. I do not say we are going to set the world on fire, but we hope to take some steps in that direction.<sup>48</sup>

Such rhetoric was nothing new during Pentagon nomination hearings, but the team of McNamara and Sylvester were not content to rely on hollow promises merely to try. By McNamara's press conference of May 26, 1961, the Department of Defense had published its most definitive statement on information policy in history. Sylvester was a major architect, but the

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<sup>47</sup>. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Nominations, 87th Congress, 1st sess., January 18, 1961, pp. 25-26.

<sup>48</sup>. Ibid.

full endorsement of McNamara provided a legitimizing factor. Unlike Neil McElroy, who attempted at least some support of Snyder with little success, McNamara insisted --indeed demanded--on service obedience. As the Army's chief of staff, General George H. Decker, observed later, McNamara placed a harness upon many freedoms that the services had enjoyed in previous years.<sup>49</sup>

McNamara's announcement stated in part:

The public information policies of the Department of Defense require a delicate accommodation of two competing values. As President Kennedy has observed, the challenge of our times imposes two requirements that may seem almost contradictory in tone, but which must be reconciled and fulfilled...the need for far greater public information...the need for far greater official secrecy. The reconciliation of these two requirements is particularly difficult within the Department of Defense.<sup>50</sup>

The new secretary of defense reported that he intended to rely on four basic principles to guide the Department of Defense toward this goal:

1. In a democratic society the public must be kept informed of the major issues in national defense policy.
2. It is essential to avoid disclosure of information that can be of material assistance to our potential enemies, and thereby weaken our defense position. It is equally important to avoid overclassification--when in doubt underclassify.
3. Public statements of what appears to be Department of Defense policy must reflect our policy in fact.
4. In public discussions, all officials of the Department should confine themselves to defense matters.<sup>51</sup>

This position was somewhat novel for a government department in that it represented a considerably more open stance than those of previous administrations. Representative John E. Moss (Democrat-California), who had been openly

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49. General George H. Decker, recorded interview by Larry J. Hackman, September 18, 1968, p. 26 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

50. Office of the Secretary of Defense, For the Press, No. 514-61, (Washington: May 29, 1961).

51. Ibid. These four directives were to be a part of Department of Defense Directive 5230.13 on May 31, 1961.



critical of the information practices of former Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Murray Snyder, praised the improvement in Secretary McNamara's policy. In a letter to McNamara, Moss particularly lauded two new policies: that the public has a right to as much bad news as good and that the Pentagon should underclassify when in doubt.<sup>52</sup> The congressman later reported that the statement "which while not new is nevertheless most alarming...Advocacy of a program of misinformation constitutes a grave disservice to a nation already confused and suffering from informational malnutrition."<sup>53</sup>

Although significant in itself, the McNamara position was only a prelude to a more important public affairs policy statement that followed in July, 1961. After considerable review and debate, McNamara approved and published Sylvester's new public affairs charter, a document that, unlike all those before, was to continue in force some two decades later.

A comparison of the new Department of Defense Directive No. 5122.5, dated July 10, 1961, with the previous charter endorsed by Murray Snyder, dated February 27, 1959, reveals the audition of the following responsibilities for public affairs personnel of the department:

1. Provide the American people with maximum information about the Department of Defense consistent with national security.
2. Initiate and support activities contributing to good relations between the Department of Defense and all segments of the public at home and abroad. These activities will be carried out in overseas areas in

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52. John E. Moss, Letter to the Secretary of Defense, Washington, June 6, 1961.

53. United Press International news release, Washington, May 12, 1961.

collaboration with the Department of State and the United States Information Agency.

3. Plan for the Department of Defense national public media censorship activities during a declared National Emergency.<sup>54</sup>

The new charter also revealed nine further responsibilities to be assumed by Sylvester's office;

-- to provide policy guidance to the Department of Defense on public affairs matters and approve public affairs aspects of actions having national and international significant in the fields of public information and community relations;

--to develop public affairs plans, policies and programs and approve significant public affairs actions;

--to provide news analysis and clipping service to the secretary of defense and his office;

--to evaluate and approve requests for Department of Defense cooperation in community relations programs;

--to provide for travel approval in military carriers for news media and non-Department of Defense personnel, for public affairs purposes;

--to coordinate Department of Defense public affairs with those of other federal departments and agencies;

--to advise all major components of the Department of Defense prior to taking actions which have significant public affairs implications;

--to receive information from all major Department of Defense components and to conduct concurrent planning to the extent that maximum unclassified information can be made available to the public; and

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54. Department of Defense Directive 5122.5, Charter for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, July 10, 1961.

--to act as releasing authority and provide security review for all pertinent information to the national civil defense program.<sup>55</sup>

All these functions were not entirely new to defense public affairs, but this was the first time that they were codified. As William G. McNamara noted in his study of the office, "during the Snyder administration his responsibility in those areas was fuzzy. The new charter not only clearly delineated Sylvester's responsibilities and functions but (also) put a positive emphasis upon their execution."<sup>56</sup>

Sylvester clearly had authored a major policy document, perhaps one of the broadest in scope for any cabinet-level publicist in history. Yet the document merely would have been another in a long series of directives from the Pentagon had it not been for the full support Secretary McNamara gave Sylvester in its enforcement.

This continued confidence in subordinates was a mark of the McNamara administration in general,<sup>57</sup> but its emphasis probably was among the greatest in the public affairs arena. Moreover, even most reporters supported Sylvester.<sup>58</sup>

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55. Ibid.

56. William G. McNamara, "A Critical Analysis of the Formation and Development of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Within the U.S. Department of Defense," (Master's thesis, The American University, 1963), p. 98.

57. This is a common observation among many who evaluated Secretary of Defense McNamara's managerial abilities. For example, Sylvester's successor, Phil G. Goulding wrote, "He demanded decision-making from top associates, and knew he could get decisions only if those associates felt secure to make them." Letter to Thomas D. Morris, inspector general, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of the Secretary, Washington, Jan 5, 1978. Also see C.W. Borklund, Men of the Pentagon (New York: Praeger, 1966) and The Department of Defense (New York: Praeger, 1968).

58. The press generally approved Sylvester's nomination for they felt, perhaps more than ever before, that an "insider" who would be sympathetic to their views would take office. See, for example, Aviation Daily, January 11, 1961; The Los Angeles Times, Jan 12, 1961; The Washington Post, Jan 14, 1961; The New York Herald Tribune, Feb 3, 1961; and Newsweek, Feb 13, 1961.

That support was to be tested almost immediately. As Newsweek magazine later reported, all that Murray Snyder had left Sylvester was "pale green walls" and "an onion skin copy of a speech for 'observations and comment' from the Navy's outspoken Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arliegh A. (31-Knot) Burke."<sup>59</sup>

Admirals and generals for years had delivered speeches expressing views on international affairs much to the dismay of many American leaders, but certain "tough on communism" speeches during the 1950s had caused a rather uneasy feeling among United States allies, particularly those close to the Soviet Union. Yet little had been done, save President Harry S. Truman's historic recall of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur early in the decade.

Assistant Secretary Snyder had attempted to enforce a more active speech review posture during the height of Senator Joseph McCarthy's heyday as a crusader against communism in 1957,<sup>60</sup> but, as mentioned, Snyder had little success. Snyder had improved the security review function at the Pentagon somewhat and had centralized the release of news to some degree. His failure was traced to his lack of support from the three secretaries under whom he served.<sup>61</sup>

Sylvester proved to be more forceful, and he enjoyed considerably more support. On January 23, 1961, he quickly and flatly rejected Admiral Burke's planned speech that was scheduled for delivery only four days later. The speech clearly was the type a president or secretary of state might deliver, warning Americans that Southeast Asians were waiting to see if the

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59. Newsweek, *ibid.*

60. Department of Defense Directive 5230.9, Section IV, Security and Policy Review, Washington, August 17, 1957.

61. McNamara, pp. 89-90.

United States would preserve the freedom of Laos. The admiral also referred to Cuba, where "a few aggressive communist-trained bearded fanatics enslaved an entire people." Of the Soviet Union, Burke reported, "We are dealing with fanatic, godless, unprincipled individuals who have used and will continue to use every deceit, every unethical trick to meet their ends."<sup>62</sup>

What Sylvester did not know was that Admiral Burke had directed that the speech be sent both to the White House and to the Department of State for review. The new assistant secretary was disturbed that his authority was being challenged, but other members of the administration immediately supported his position. White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger had expressed his displeasure with the speech, and the State Department reviewers had referred the document to Sylvester's office for perusal.<sup>63</sup>

President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense McNamara followed the Admiral Burke manuscript submission with public announcements that would leave no doubt about administration support of Sylvester's active role as a speech review agent. Kennedy had referred to the admiral by name in his February 1 press conference and reiterated his position with the Theodore Roosevelt dictum of "Speak softly and carry a big stick" in his meeting with the press on February 3.<sup>64</sup>

McNamara perhaps made his most definitive public statement nine days later while being interviewed for the National Broadcasting Company's Today program by Martin Agronsky:

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62. Office of the Secretary of Defense, Background of Review of Admiral Burke's Proposed Address Upon Accepting the 1960 Silver Quill Award, Washington, undated.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

AGRONSKY: Then no military man, as far as you're concerned, is going to be permitted to say anything that would affect in any way our foreign policy relations with other countries.

McNAMARA: That is correct.

AGRONSKY: Reason?

McNAMARA: Because a military officer speaking on a matter of foreign policy is speaking in a field that lies outside his responsibility and yet as a representative of this government--an official representative--his words are taken as the policy of the government. This is quite inappropriate.<sup>65</sup>

Sylvester soon had made this issue a matter of public policy when he sent to the service secretaries and to the major theater commanders throughout the world Department of Defense Public Affairs Guidance #18 which outlined public statements in areas of foreign policy.<sup>66</sup>

The Admiral Burke incident was not to die quietly. Conservative political leaders and reporters charged that Sylvester was "muzzling" the military. Republican Senator Barry Goldwater termed the incident "frightening," and his New Hampshire colleague Styles Bridges denounced Sylvester's "gag policy."<sup>67</sup>

Most observers, however, supported the action. Distinguished reporters such as Roscoe Drummond, Edward C. Morgan and J.F. ter Horst devoted full reports to Sylvester's seemingly unshakable will. Drummond wrote in his syndicated column:

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65. Ibid.

66. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Department of Defense Public Affairs Guidance #18, Washington, February 27, 1961.

67. Newsweek, ibid.

Fortunately the man who had to begin the new speech-editing task and will have to bear the brunt of a thankless but necessary job is a stern-willed, stiff-spined former Washington correspondent of the Newark News, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Arthur<sup>68</sup> Sylvester. Messrs. Kennedy and McNamara chose the right agent.

American Broadcasting Company newscaster Edward P. Morgan, meanwhile, lambasted the "end run" that Admiral Burke had attempted in an effort to undermine Sylvester's authority:

Burke's own office sent copies of the original bombshell by special messenger to the White House and the State Department. If the admiral's strategy was to test and/or hopefully torpedo the new civilian authority in the Pentagon, his projectile backfired and he himself was sunk. President Kennedy was, to put it mildly, most negatively impressed by Burke's excessively bellicose remarks about the Soviet Union; his brother Bobby, the attorney general, who happened to see the test too, is still shaking his head in amazement and the State Department was stunned. Not only did the White House and State completely uphold Sylvester and his own chief, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, but a new directive is in the works to spell out more explicitly than ever before the responsibility of the military brass to cut<sup>69</sup> their public utterances to the pattern of the administration policy.

Ter Horst, a Washington bureau reporter for the Detroit News, who would briefly serve as press secretary to President Gerald Ford, saw the benefit of the Sylvester position as one not only for the domestic well-being of the nation but also for the betterment of international tranquility:

That meant the former missile-rattling speeches of the Pentagon brass were no longer permitted. Foreign policy would be the domain of the President and Secretary of State (Dean) Rusk, not admirals and generals.

Reaction from Allied capitals was so good that the President reportedly confided to his top advisors later that Sylvester's decision was the 'best thing that has happened to us so far, and especially abroad.'<sup>70</sup>

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68. The New York Herald Tribune, February 3, 1961.

69. Broadcast, "Edward P. Morgan and the News," ABC Radio, February 1, 1961.

70. The Detroit News, March 20, 1961.

The control that Sylvester was beginning to exercise over those who previously paid little attention to an assistant secretary for public affairs next surfaced within the video industry. Executives both in television and in the motion picture industry quickly discovered that a stern challenge would be forthcoming from the Pentagon to those who abused administration policy.

Scarcely a week had passed in Sylvester's tenure before he had unknowingly approved military participation in the Darryl F. Zanuck film, "The Longest Day." He later had learned that several hundred soldiers from West Germany thus would fill supporting roles in the film at public expense. It was to be the last such movie adventure, Sylvester was to announce later.<sup>71</sup>

It previously had been an unwritten Pentagon policy that films favorable to the standing American defense effort would receive some sort of public support in men and materiel while those films openly critical would not. This, although in the interest of the Department of Defense, was unfair, in Sylvester's opinion. He justified the Pentagon's part in supporting "The Longest Day" in the following letter to Senator Wayne Morse:

The decision to cooperate on THE LONGEST DAY, a historical re-enactment of the Normandy invasion, was based upon the fact that it is a story of great American, British and French heroism, and would bring to the screen one of the outstanding historical events of our time. The European Command was responsible for furnishing the production assistance, and limited their participation so as not to affect their operational readiness or training.<sup>72</sup>

Later, however, Sylvester admitted that, perhaps due to his recency as an assistant secretary, he had made a mistake. He apparently had approved a film without really knowing the particulars.<sup>73</sup>

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71. Interview, Sylvester with Stern, p. 79.

72. Letter, Arthur Sylvester to Senator Wayne Morse, January 18, 1962.

73. Recorded interview, Arthur Sylvester by Larry Suid, New York, New York, August 16, 1973, p. 3 of manuscript.



What had contributed even more to Sylvester's sensitivity was the September 1961 filming of a simulated American border guard unit at the Friedrichstrasse Crossing between West and East Berlin. He particularly was angered because the European Command had approved the filming and that a television comedian, Jack Paar, served as moderator.

Infuriated with news of the episode, Sylvester reported, "If newspaper reports are accurate, it was a disgraceful episode."<sup>74</sup> United Press International's account of the matter said in part:

Fifty armed United States soldiers....A jeep mounting an anti-tank gun and several others mounting machine guns moved into position.... One jeep with a machine gun had a front wheel planted right in the white stripe that indicates the border between East and West...and it was all for Jack Paar, the television star.<sup>75</sup>

While members of Congress had objected, including some sarcastically inquiring whether Paar was the "new Berlin commander,"<sup>76</sup> Sylvester attempted to put the incident into perspective for the public and guilty United States Army officials who had approved the filming. "We are engaged in a most serious business in Berlin," he remarked. "There is great danger of provocative incidents. It was naive, at least, for the Army to give the communists the chance to watch out filming of a light TV show under these circumstances."<sup>77</sup>

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74. Broadcast, CBS Radio News, September 8, 1961, 10 10 p.m.

75. United Press International news release, Berlin, West Germany, September 8, 1961.

76. The Chicago Tribune, September 9, 1961. Rep. Edgar W. Weistand (Republican-California) is reported as having first made the comment.

77. Ibid.

By the middle of 1962, it was clear that Sylvester had assumed more control over the filming of military subjects. Such major filmmakers as Warner Brothers and Universal Artists began to object to Sylvester's departure from previous administrations' policies and complained openly. One film, "A Gathering of Eagles," clearly favorable to the United States Air Force, reportedly was nearly discarded before it took President Kennedy's support "to get it past the Pentagon brass."<sup>78</sup>

The motion picture industry, finding it more expensive to produce films without free Pentagon support, began to lobby with the Congress in order to put pressure upon Sylvester to change his non-support policy. Sylvester summarized his steadfast position in a June 30, 1962 letter to Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. Sylvester stood on four points: first, that safety must never be compromised; second, that military readiness should not be impaired; third, and most significantly, that the only Pentagon support of films would be while military personnel were performing their normal duties; and fourth, should public military equipment be used for a commercial film, the government would be reimbursed for its cost. Exceptions would be made "only in the most unusual circumstances."<sup>79</sup>

Sylvester clearly had antagonized both commercial filmmakers who had expected more Pentagon support and conservative military leaders of the nation who had wished to voice their fears of a communist world takeover. The charges of "muzzling" of the military were to continue during 1962, including heated public debates on Capitol Hill between Sylvester and Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Sylvester later reviewed his first

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78. The New York Post, August 22, 1962.

79. Letter, Arthur Sylvester to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Washington, June 30, 1962.

eighteen months in office thusly:

...we were only beginning to assert the authority that was inherent in our office. That authority had not been asserted before because my predecessor had had to live with two or three different secretaries of defense, none of whom had picked him as their man. Furthermore, he had no basic status because he had to send papers up to the secretary and they were intercepted. Some of them never got to the secretary. I found them there (in Sylvester's office). They were sent back and there were all sorts of bastards in between.....<sup>80</sup>

Although he had enjoyed considerable confidence from his superiors in the wake of increasing criticism, Sylvester had not yet faced perhaps his most crucial challenge. Neither he nor any other American knew in the summer of 1962 that the Soviet Union was preparing to assemble offensive missile silos in the neighboring nation of Cuba.

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80. Recorded interview, Sylvester by Suid, New York, New York, December 23, 1974, p. 7 of manuscript.

## CHAPTER IV

### CRISIS IN CUBA AND THE "RIGHT TO LIE"

The relatively high level of credibility Kennedy and aides such as Sylvester enjoyed with the press at the beginning of 1961 was short-lived. President Kennedy had inherited a plan from President Eisenhower which authorized the training and equipping of a brigade of Cuban exiles intent upon the overthrow of Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Kennedy advisors, some of whom were holdovers from the Eisenhower administration, convinced the new president that the brigade should attempt a raid on Cuban territory. The president approved the invasion shortly after taking office.<sup>1</sup>

While the intent here is not to recall the tragedies at the Bay of Pigs in the spring of 1961, it is important to note that this was among the administration's first major errors. In his April 12, 1961 press conference, Kennedy at the least misled reporters about Cuban plans when he pledged:

...there will not be, under any conditions, any intervention in Cuba by United States armed forces, and this government will do everything it possibly can--and I think it can meet its responsibilities--to make sure that there are no Americans involved in any actions inside Cuba...this administration's attitude is so understood and shared by the anti-Castro exiles from Cuba in this country.<sup>2</sup>

Although Kennedy had presumed himself technically correct at least by the fact that the brigade was comprised entirely of non-Americans, he

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1. Theodor C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 294-296.

2. Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, Presidential Press Conference, April 12, 1961, p. 324.

ultimately was proved to be an outright liar. A number of American flight instructors participated in the attack of April 17, and four were killed in action.<sup>3</sup> Faced with an outrage of public opinion throughout the world, the credibility of the administration plunged. Kennedy historian Theodore Sorenson called the episode "the worst defeat" of the president's career.<sup>4</sup>

Kennedy took full responsibility for the matter. When Kennedy supporters suggested the new president merely was following a plan conceived by the Eisenhower administration, he gave strict orders for them to cease any comments about the roles of any predecessors.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, however, Kennedy increased his effort to control the flow of information from the government. Shortly more than a week after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the president admitted to a need for "far greater public information" but at the same time suggested to newspaper publishers a more difficult requirement for them to accept, the need for "far greater official secrecy."<sup>6</sup> The press refused to respond. As Kennedy reported to Alicia Patterson, editor and publisher of Newsday, a Long Island daily newspaper, "I have asked the newspaper industry, without much success, to exercise more self-restraint in publishing intelligence data helpful to any enemy."<sup>7</sup>

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3. Sorenson, p. 300.

4. Ibid, p. 308.

5. The Washington Post, April 27, 1961.

6. Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, Address, "The Presidents and the Press," Before the American Newspaper Publishers Association, New York City, April 27, 1961, p. 335.

7. Letter, John F. Kennedy to Mrs. Alicia Patterson; May 11, 1961.

Largely because the Bay of Pigs operation was classified as a matter to be handled by the Central Intelligence Agency and not the Department of Defense, Arthur Sylvester did not become closely involved with the 1961 disaster in Cuba. Such was not the case for a second development there the following year.

Perhaps the first indication at the White House of an impending second crisis in Cuba began to surface early in the week before the nation was to learn about it. On Tuesday, October 16, 1962, Pierre Salinger noted that President Kennedy's mood was unusually gloomy. He had speculated that this was due to the departure of Algerian prime minister Ahmed Ben Bella from Washington for Havana, where Bella joined with Fidel Castro that day in a joint communique urging the withdrawal of United States personnel from Guantanamo Bay.<sup>8</sup>

The president's schedule was remarkably busy that week. There was a hurried meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko that Thursday, followed by a continuing stream of high-ranking advisors from within as well as outside of government. Salinger was suspicious that something was happening of great concern.<sup>9</sup> By Friday, October 19, press inquiries began to be directed in great numbers toward Cuba. Most asked whether the United States was planning an invasion.<sup>10</sup> President Kennedy continued to hide the situation from Salinger. He referred future inquiries to Sylvester, whom Kennedy telephoned on the 19th. Sylvester was instructed to deny

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8. Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 248.

9. Ibid, p. 250.

10. Ibid, p. 251.

all suggestion that a crisis was brewing in Cuba.<sup>11</sup>

The President was scheduled for a campaign trip through the Midwest that weekend, and Kennedy did begin the journey. Aide Kenneth O'Donnell, however, hinted that further secrecy was necessary. He told Salinger that the president would "develop a cold" on Saturday, October 20.<sup>12</sup> Even more alarming was the fact that Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, also away from the capital in Hawaii that day, curiously was developing a cold as well. Both leaders returned to Washington immediately.<sup>13</sup>

By Sunday, October 21, it was clear to Salinger and Sylvester that the press soon would discover what was happening. Questions became more detailed, and the tactics of "no comment" and "I'll look into that for you" were wearing thin. Salinger had demanded a briefing, and at 9 a.m. that morning national security advisor McGeorge Bundy complied. Bundy told the press secretary that high-flying U-2 observation planes detected offensive missile silos in Cuba the previous Sunday, the 14th.<sup>14</sup>

While the press increasingly found evidence that a crisis was looming in Cuba, the administration attempted to keep matters secret. As a diversionary measure, for example, Kennedy ordered that experts on Europe, the Mideast and the Far East be summoned quickly to the White House for important meetings that never were to take place. Such dignitaries as Averill Harriman, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, and Philips Talbott, Harriman's counterpart for the Near East, grew somewhat bitter when they sat at the White House for hours as decoys,

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11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid, p. 253.

14. Ibid, p. 254.

uninformed as were as most Americans about what was happening.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, Salinger planned a meeting of the Censorship Advisory Board, a group of fifteen news executives who were to discuss information policies during time of war. He then met with Sylvester and Robert Manning, assistant secretary of state for public affairs, at Salinger's home in order to work out news coordination matters among the three offices.<sup>16</sup>

It became obvious that President Kennedy could not keep the shocking news of offensive missiles in Cuba to a small circle of associates much longer. His executive committee meeting of the National Security Council Sunday reflected a concern that a response to the threat had to be agreed upon almost immediately, before the American people were to know of the impending crisis. Should the information be released before such a decision, planners felt, the Soviet Union would have more options and, with heated political pressure, the president fewer. Kennedy chose the idea of a quarantine of Cuban ports by American military forces at that meeting.<sup>17</sup>

Sylvester, directed by the president to handle operational information of a crisis he finally knew about but could not discuss with the press per Kennedy's command, faced a difficult day Monday, the 22nd. Troops were being alerted in the Deep South. A large combined exercise in the Caribbean Sea, code-named PHILBRIGLEX-62, was the major topic of inquiry. Sylvester

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15. Raymond Alston Rimkus, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Decision-Making Analysis....," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1972), p. 117. Also see Bernard H. Ross, "American Government in Crisis: An Analysis of the Executive Branch in Government During the Cuban Missile Crisis," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1971).

16. Salinger, p. 257.

17. Ibid, p. 259. Also see Robert F. Kennedy, Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 43.



told reporters less than the truth when he said that the maneuvers absolutely had no link to Cuba.<sup>18</sup>

Some reporters knew that Sylvester was lying. Several newspapers, remarkably shrewd in their detective work when required, knew the entire story by Sunday evening. But they agreed to go along for the time being for two reasons. First, the president had asked to go in the interest of national security.<sup>19</sup> And second, the president was to make a formal announcement on television that evening.<sup>20</sup>

Although the major reason why Kennedy waited until Monday evening to release the information about the crisis was to thoroughly consider all options, from doing nothing to an all-out attack upon Cuba, and then to reach a decision before the Soviet Union knew of the discovery in the United States, there also was a second reason. The president, upon the advice of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, wanted visual proof presented to the American public. It took several days to complete the delicate photography work, which had to include detailed identification and photo enlargement for a television audience. While the nation's leadership weighed their courses of action, Pentagon technicians completed this task.<sup>21</sup>

Promptly at 7 p.m. Monday, October 22, 1962, President Kennedy addressed the nation. He said, in part:

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18. Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (New York: Bantam, 1966), p. 36.

19. Salinger, p. 261.

20. Ibid, p. 259.

21. Adam Yarmolinsky, recorded interview by Daniel Ellsberg, December 5, 1964, p. 76 of manuscript, John F. Kennedy Library oral history collection, Dorchester, Mass.

This government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military build-up on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purposes of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.....<sup>22</sup>

In order to coordinate information flow, Pierre Salinger had directed installation of a three-way "hot line" between the public affairs offices in the White House, the Pentagon and at the Department of State.<sup>23</sup>

Soon after the president's stirring announcement, Sylvester produced copies of the aerial photography for the press. He calmly told reporters that the national defense forces would have little problem handling the situation.<sup>24</sup>

What was critical to public affairs efforts at the time was not whether the military was of sufficient size and strength to thwart Soviet ships, for this was a problem for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but rather whether reporters would obtain information that might adversely affect national security. Sylvester's first effort was to assure to the best of his ability that there would be no leaks through military channels. He issued a world-wide public affairs cable to all military commands, stating:

It is reaffirmed that the responsibility for release of public announcements and other public affairs operations of the Department of Defense or any segment thereof regarding Department of Defense activities during the current Cuban quarantine is lodged solely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). There will be no release of any such information including picture or film without the approval of the designated office.<sup>25</sup>

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22. Sorenson, p. 703.

23. Salinger, p. 260.

24. The New York Times, October 23, 1962.

25. Cable, Arthur Sylvester, October 24, 1962, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Subject File Cuba, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Perhaps reflecting upon the secrecy of the previous days and toward the way Sylvester proposed to handle defense information during the Cuban situation, one reporter asked, "Is this a war footing type of thing?" to which Sylvester replied, "This is actually extrapolated from our regular procedures when you are in this sort of situation."<sup>26</sup> The administration's policy toward the release of information was a delicate one, to be sure. President Kennedy and his public affairs staff could not impose wartime censorship, but they did not think they could allow publication of detailed military information, either. The question became one of where to draw the line. For Sylvester, guidelines were given by the secretary of defense.<sup>27</sup> but they also came directly from the White House, from the president and his press secretary.<sup>28</sup>

During his 4 p.m. press conference on October 24, Sylvester outlined those instructions in detail:

The following information is considered vital to our national security and therefore will not be released by the Department of Defense. Despite this fact, it is possible that such information may come into the possession of news media. During the current tense international situation, the White House feels that the publication of such information is contrary to the public interest. We ask public information media of all types to exercise caution and discretion in the publication of such information.

- 1) Any discussion of plans for employment of strategic or tactical forces of the United States including types of equipment and new or planned location of command or control centers or detection systems.

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26. News briefing, Arthur Sylvester, October 24, 1962, p. 10 of manuscript, Press Conference Files, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, D.C.

27. Ibid, p. 29.

28. Interview with Arthur Sylvester, Cold Spring, New York, August 3, 1978.

- 2) Estimates of United States capability of destroying targets, including numbers of weapons required, size and character of forces required, ability of these forces to penetrate defenses, and accuracy or reliability of our forces or weapon systems.
- 3) Intelligence estimates concerning targets or target systems, such as numbers, types and locations of aiming points in the target system, enemy missile and bomber forces, etc.
- 4) Intelligence estimates of enemy plans or capabilities, or information which would reveal the level of success of United States intelligence efforts or operations with respect to Cuba or the Communist Bloc.
- 5) Details as to numbers or movements of United States forces, including naval units and vessels, aircraft, missile forces or ground forces, ammunition, equipment, etc. Announcement may be made of such unit movements after the movement has been completed.
- 6) Degree of alert of military forces.
- 7) Location of aircraft or supporting equipment. Presence of aircraft observable in the public domain may be confirmed.
- 8) Emergency dispersal plans of aircraft and units including dispersal capabilities, times, schedules or logistical support.
- 9) Official estimates of vulnerability to various forms of enemy action, including sabotage, of United States Armed Forces and installations.
- 10) New data concerning operational missile distribution, numbers, operational readiness. Estimates of effectiveness of strike capability of missile forces.
- 11) Details of command and control systems, including new or planned command posts and facilities, estimates of ability to survive enemy attack, security measures, etc., including sea or airborne command posts.
- 12) Details of airlift or sealift capabilities, including size and nature of forces to be lifted, time limits for such lifts, and supply capabilities, with respect to possible specific areas of operation.

Although these guidelines fell short of a full-scale censorship campaign peculiar during a declared war, some reporters saw little

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29. Newsbriefing, *ibid*, pp. 1-3.

difference. Sylvester's old colleague, Elie Abel, was among them.<sup>30</sup> Reporters particularly became infuriated when they were not allowed in the quarantine area, not nor were they allowed aboard any military ships, planes or vehicles headed for or returning from that region.<sup>31</sup>

Sylvester still believed that the press was discovering too much information. He then issued the following document:

October 27, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERSONNEL

SUBJECT: Procedures for Handling Media Representatives

Increasing responsibilities have been placed on the public information offices throughout the Department in the current world situation to avoid the disclosure of information affecting the national security. Accordingly, it becomes increasingly important to disclose all information which can be appropriately released to the public in an expeditious and equitable manner. To accomplish this objective, it is necessary that these offices be kept fully informed as to information made available to media representatives by both military and civilian officials of the Department. To this end, the following procedure will be adhered to:

The substance of each interview and telephone conversation with a media representative will be reported to the appropriate public information office before the close of business that day. A report need not be made if a representative of the public information office is present at the interview.

This procedure applies to all Department of Defense personnel in the Washington area.<sup>32</sup>

This probably turned out to be Sylvester's biggest mistake during the missile crisis. While most reporters grumbled, they generally went along

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30. Abel, pp. 133-134.

31. The Philadelphia Inquirer, October 27, 1962.

32. Arthur Sylvester, personal papers, Cold Spring, New York. Sylvester later privately admitted that this tactic was a mistake, but he never suggested it before the public.

with the twelve-point plan which largely asked the press to voluntarily review materials before publication or broadcast. But this maneuver, a tactic reminiscent of the Murray Snyder days, was unthinkable. William Frye in 1949 had failed with a similar move as had Snyder a decade later.<sup>33</sup> Although Sylvester had considerably more power than either man and there was somewhat of a crisis at hand, the press rebelled almost in unison.<sup>34</sup>

Richard Fryklund, a Washington Star reporter who later was to become a deputy assistant secretary for public affairs during the latter months of Robert McNamara's tenure at the Pentagon, asked Sylvester to explain why such a policy was necessary. Sylvester reportedly replied that information during the Cuban crisis had become a "weapon,"<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the Kennedy administration had carefully orchestrated the image of the entire chain of events through selected announcements that were reviewed for their timing as well as content.

What Sylvester was referring to in part was simply President Kennedy's polished manipulation of the news media toward his goals. The president's dramatic network announcement of the discovery on October 22 and perhaps an equally dramatic made-for-television revelation of the silo photographs at the United Nations where Ambassador Adlai Stevenson issued his famous "until hell freezes over" warning to Soviet representative Valerian Zorin<sup>36</sup> were significant enough. The impact of each action was profound throughout

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33. William G. McNamara, "A Critical Analysis of the Formation and Development of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Within the U.S. Department of Defense," (Master's thesis, The American University, 1963), p. 107.

34. Associated Press news release, October 27, 1962.

35. The Washington Star, October 29, 1962.

36. Robert F. Kennedy, pp. 75-76.

the world.

But probably Kennedy's most revolutionary use of the media was in his historic messages to and from his Soviet adversary, Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Rather than await possibly dangerous delays between world leaders through official diplomatic channels as has been customary, Kennedy and Khrushchev used the press.<sup>37</sup> Kennedy and Salinger decided to release official statements to the television networks and wire services. These media, it was presumed, were being monitored by the Soviet leadership. Khrushchev followed suit, issuing his replies through Radio Moscow and Tass.<sup>38</sup> This eventually was to lead to the "hot line," the red telephone that was later to be installed for direct communication between Washington and Moscow, but for the time being the mass media fulfilled this important function.<sup>39</sup>

The press, however, did not interpret Sylvester's comments simply as a way to contact Moscow. If there was a perceived enemy during the latter days of October, some reporters felt that the administration's "weapons" were used against journalists as well as the Soviet Union and Cuba. Lee Hills, president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, sent a telegram to Sylvester reflecting this opinion. "There is...no doubt that in time of crisis a sense of responsibility and restraint on the part of all public information media is imperative," Hills wrote. "But to attempt to manage the news so that a free press should speak in 'one voice to your adversary' could be far more dangerous to the cause of

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37. Salinger, p. 270.

38. Ibid, p. 113.

39. Ibid, p. 270.

freedom than the free play of dissent, than the fullest possible publication of the facts."<sup>40</sup>

President Kennedy was only mildly disturbed with Sylvester. The president's objection was that Sylvester's choice of words seemed too strong, too blunt. Kennedy called on speechwriter Theodore Sorenson to prepare a letter to Sylvester to that effect, but the Pentagon spokesman never backed down before critics from the press, Congress, and even the general public. For that bit of spunk and perserverance, Kennedy showed his admiration.<sup>41</sup>

In his first formal press conference after the missile crisis, the President discovered first-hand how angrily opposed reporters were to Sylvester's tactics and comments. In one reporter's appeal to his sense of a need for freedom of information in a free society, the president responded that he would talk with both Sylvester and reporters "so that there is a free flow of news to which the press is entitled."<sup>42</sup>

The president took immediate action. He lifted the twelve-point security guidance published a month earlier.<sup>43</sup> More quietly and with less fanfare, Sylvester removed his requirement that all defense personnel report their dealings with the media.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>. The New York Times, November 1, 1962.

<sup>41</sup>. Sorenson, p. 321.

<sup>42</sup>. Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, Presidential Press Conference, November 20, 1962, p. 515.

<sup>43</sup>. News release No. 1392-62, November 21, 1962, Department of Defense, Office of Public Affairs, Washington.

<sup>44</sup>. Interview with Sylvester, *ibid*.



Although Congress, led by Rep. John Moss as its freedom of information crusader, pressured Sylvester for more concessions throughout the winter, the entire matter of news management might have subsided as an issue had it not been for another reputed quote by Sylvester on the subject.

On December 6, 1962, Sylvester was invited to speak to the New York Professional Chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, the journalism fraternity. Still the object of considerable editorial and congressional criticism, Sylvester saw the speech as an opportunity to clarify his position about the handling of news, particularly national security news, during an emergency. Most journalists actually covering the speech published or broadcast reports close to Sylvester's intended message, that during certain rare occasions--such as when the United States leadership felt the national security was at stake--the government could not tell the people selected types of information.

One source, however, reported Sylvester as saying that the government had "a right to lie" to protect its interests. This report, by ABC News, only rekindled the entire issue. Once again asked to respond to the validity of a quoted report, Sylvester remarked sarcastically, "I had thirty-seven years of honest life (dealing with the news) before I turned dishonest."<sup>45</sup>

Reflecting upon the report years later, Sylvester was more philosophical. The press could not prove that the statement was made so flatly because the reporter allegedly hearing the remark did not realize that his recorder was out of tape. "What I said," Sylvester recalled in an interview,

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<sup>45</sup>. Editor and Publisher, "Sylvester Says He Was Rude But Right," December 15, 1962.

"was that when two superpowers are nose-to-nose and the security of the world hangs in the balance, the nation has a right--indeed, a duty (emphasis his)--to lie to protect the citizens of the nation and the world."<sup>46</sup>

The issue would not die, but the president supported Sylvester throughout the controversy. When May Craig of the Portland (Maine) Press Herald asked Kennedy about managed news in his administration, the president shot back, "You are charging us with something, Mrs. Craig, and then you are asking me to define what you are charging me with...we've had very limited success in managing the news, if that's what we've been trying to do."<sup>47</sup> Several months later, on May 8, 1963, another reporter asked Kennedy how he reacted to calls that Sylvester be fired. The president once again voiced his "high regard" for his top press representative at the Pentagon.<sup>48</sup>

That fall, the mutual respect and confidence perhaps unmatched between a president and a cabinet-level public affairs officer was to end. President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

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46. Interview with Sylvester, *ibid.*

47. Public Papers, *ibid.*, February 21, 1963, p. 204.

48. *Ibid.*, May 8, 1963, p. 169.

## CHAPTER V

### EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSIONS

Arthur Sylvester went on to serve six years as an assistant secretary of defense, slightly fewer than three years for John Kennedy, slightly more than three for Lyndon Johnson. Although both Sylvester and his boss, Robert McNamara, had felt a special attraction to Kennedy and may have considered leaving public service after the tragedy that took place in Dallas, the new president, Johnson, had urged them both to stay.

For Sylvester at least, things were not the same. Johnson paid less attention to him. Although the former vice president certainly attempted to get close to reporters--some have charged too close--something seemed to be missing. Perhaps it was merely the unmatched Kennedy style of doing things. Perhaps it was that telephone calls directly from the Oval Office now were rare. Perhaps it simply was a memory of the most horrible day in one's life that would not go away. Whatever it was, it was no more.

Part of it was the slain president's belief in the importance of the press, to be sure. President Kennedy was a master, and Sylvester one of his key supporting actors, at the use of the mass media to the greatest advantage. Kennedy charmed his way into press columns and onto television screens, then carefully reviewed how he did it. His concern for a positive media image was perhaps unrivaled in the history of the American presidency. His uses of television, in particular, were novel in many ways. Even those who have followed him have not matched his flair and style before the cameras, despite the growing sophistication about the uses of television. Whether in his rocking chair to chat or his swimming pool for leisure activities with a few friends, including

reporters, Kennedy used the media, particularly television, to show he was a handsome, witty, articulate, and highly persuasive chief executive.

This positive image only could help others around him, particularly those who dealt with the press. It was easy to "sell" a John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

At the same time, it was easy to deal with the press for a second reason. Because Kennedy held the press in such high regard and understood them like few presidents before him, he also placed his public affairs personnel in high regard. He was close to them, confiding in them when necessary. He recognized their importance in the federal bureaucracy, and he accorded them a level of status that other presidents before had not.

Sylvester perhaps gained most from this symbiotic relationship. He gained because the president had regarded the Department of Defense as the most important cabinet-level department. This largely was due to the president's total confidence and admiration for its secretary, Robert McNamara, the wizard with numbers from the Ford Motor Company. It was due, too, to Kennedy's military background as a World War II hero in the South Pacific. The fact that McNamara was the "star" who overshadowed Secretary of State Dean Rusk clearly placed the defense community ahead of those in diplomatic circles, at least in Kennedy's view.

The fact that the young president was personally fond of Sylvester also explains the reason for Sylvester's stature in the government. Sylvester reportedly was the first reporter to print Senator Kennedy's support of a censure of Senator McCarthy, architect of the anti-communism craze of the 1950's, and this fact singled out Sylvester from a crowd of reporters during the 1960 campaign. Sylvester, along with Elie Abel and a few

others, had become among his favorites. After an Abel refusal, Kennedy had the opportunity to hand-pick Sylvester for the public affairs job in the Pentagon. The fact that McNamara was not as sensitive to public affairs and fully supported Kennedy's nomination of Sylvester only allowed Sylvester even more authority.

What further identified Sylvester as a key figure in the government from a public affairs perspective was that he was across the Potomac River, out of the White House, in the Pentagon. While the president ran his own public relations show, allowing Peirre Salinger only detail work and authority over information personnel throughout government, Sylvester was far enough away from the White House to perhaps gain more responsibility than Salinger. Salinger's reputed blunders, though minor, further supported this relationship.

Sylvester, of course, was in the middle of his share of mistakes, too, but Kennedy seemed to brush them aside. He admired his candor. Sure, the government had not told the entire truth. Information was a weapon. Sylvester had the kind of personality to admit it. He was blunt, too blunt and candid at times, but the president supported him always. He, not Salinger, was the major spokesman outside of the president himself for the government during one of America's most important crises.

While the Cuban situation only brought Sylvester further into the limelight, it was the issues he raised--not the mere fact that he was the "spokesman"--that kept him in the public mind. The key issue here, of course, is how to handle that difficult adversary relationship between press and government. Sylvester had the ultimate opportunity to raise the issue, for history brought him the most delicate of situations for a publicist

in a free society, a crisis short of war yet dangerous enough to national security that information leaks from the press might cost lives or, even worse, kindle a war or even nuclear exchange.

The basis case against Sylvester's position, of "managing the news" as it had become known, in a free society is that it impairs the constitutional rights of a free press and therefore poses a potential danger to the American tradition of democratic and representative government. The citizenry cannot be truly free if information is concealed and carefully spoon-fed to the press by the government at times prescribed only by an insensitive administration.

Yet it is the duty of the governing body to see to it that the protection of the citizenry from foreign powers is not abridged as well. As had been the case of the Cuban missile crisis, this became a dilemma for Kennedy and his public affairs advisors. Sylvester and his colleagues stood to lose either way they turned, to lose if they gave out too much information that might have found its way into enemy hands and to the enemy's advantage, but also to lose if too little was given under the principles of a free press and its need for freedom of information. The president and his aides felt the latter was more palatable, and Sylvester, perhaps more than any other figure in government because of his position at the Department of Defense as well as his reported remarks, took the brunt of press attacks.

The press has an obligation in society, but that obligation is more one of monitoring the government critically than one of obeying its wishes. It owes government only truth and fair play. Its servants are the people, not the government. But freedom to inform is not license. It must be

carefully reviewed and tempered by the course of time, by the situation at hand. The question then becomes who should be the reviewing authority, the press or the government. This is a question that defies a simple answer and one that is perhaps best investigated in the course of events explained above.

Thomas Jefferson is widely noted for his remark that given the choice between a government without the press and a press without government, the selection easily would be the latter. But times have changed. Society is considerably more complex. Lives are exponentially more fragile in this era of potential nuclear holocaust. This is a matter President Kennedy and Arthur Sylvester realized and appreciated.

Total freedom of information, or newspapers without government as Jefferson might have said, is virtually impossible today. Critical times short of war in an atomic age pose unique problems. It is time when even greater trust and respect between press and government is mandatory for a healthy society. The press and government, two pillars of a strong democratic nation, must work harmoniously toward the common good. To do less violates the public trust in both.

In the situation presented, of course, there was no correct way for news to be handled. Sylvester later wrote, "I have always believed, and still do, that one lives and dies by his record. If it is good it will be inescapable. What changes are the evaluations of the facts."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Letter from Arthur Sylvester, August 31, 1978. This was my last contact with him before his death.

Sylvester was to die with the record still somewhat in doubt.<sup>2</sup> Although the debate of information versus secrecy likely will continue through the ages perhaps without clear resolution, it is less debatable that there was an evolution in the role of the government publicist, particularly Sylvester, during the Kennedy administration. With the twists of history ahead of him and a media-conscious president fully behind, Sylvester advanced that role in a short time.

As it was to turn out, perhaps no cabinet-level government publicist save Hodding Carter today was to approach the visibility and influence that Sylvester enjoyed from 1961 to 1963. But no president in the past two decades has understood and used the media as skillfully as John Kennedy, and appreciated the work of the public affairs community in the way that he did. Despite all advances in technology and despite the strength and charisma of the government publicist himself, this element is vital to the recipe that was so distinctive in the case of Arthur Sylvester.

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2. The New York Times, December 29, 1979. Although regarded as abrasive by most, the Times eulogized Sylvester in its obituary as "a tall man with a gentle, almost courtly, manner....."





## Department of Defense Directive

### SUBJECT

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)

### I. GENERAL

A. Pursuant to the authority vested in the Secretary of Defense and the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, including the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, one of the positions of Assistant Secretary of Defense authorized by that Act is hereby designated the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) with responsibilities, functions and authorities as prescribed herein.

B. Public affairs includes all services required of the Department of Defense in fulfilling its obligation to keep the public informed as to its activities to the maximum extent consistent with national security; to assure prompt and accurate response to inquiries concerning such activities; to facilitate public understanding of the aims, activities and needs of the Defense Department; and to provide liaison and cooperation with information media representatives and national and civic organizations with respect to matters pertaining to the Defense Department.

### II. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) is the principal staff assistant to the Secretary of Defense in the following functional fields:

1. Public information
2. Public relations
3. Public services
4. Information declassification

### III. FUNCTIONS

Under the direction, authority and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) shall perform the following functions in his assigned fields of responsibility:

1. Act as the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense, his Deputy, the Assistant Secretaries of Defense, the Secretaries of the military departments and their staffs on public information and public relations aspects of Department of Defense policies, plans and programs.
2. Provide appropriate guidance and assistance to all elements of the Department to assure fulfillment of the Department's affirmative obligation to keep the public adequately informed as to its activities.
3. Provide for the review from a security standpoint under the provisions of Executive Order 10501, of all material originated within the Department of Defense, including testimony before Congressional Committees, or by its contractors for public release or for publication by departmental personnel as individuals, and of material submitted by sources outside the Department for such review.
4. Provide for the review of official speeches, press releases, and other information originated within the Department of Defense for public release, or similar material submitted for review by other Executive agencies of the Government, for conflict with established policies or programs of the Department of Defense or of the national Government.
5. Supervise the Department of Defense Information Declassification Program.
6. Provide for the receipt and evaluation of requests for speakers received by all agencies of the Department of Defense, and when appropriate, assist in arranging for the participation of qualified personnel.
7. Represent the Department of Defense with respect to formulation or implementation of Government-wide plans, policies and programs concerning public information and public relations activities.
8. Such other functions as the Secretary of Defense assigns.

#### IV. RELATIONSHIPS

A. In the performance of his functions, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) shall:

1. Coordinate actions, as appropriate, with the military departments, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Department of Defense agencies having collateral or related functions in the field of his assigned responsibility.
2. Maintain active liaison for the exchange of information and advice with the military departments and other Department of Defense agencies.
3. Make full use of established facilities in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, military departments and other Department of Defense agencies rather than unnecessarily duplicating such facilities.
4. Maintain liaison with and assist all information media with respect to matters relating to the activities of the Department of Defense.
5. Maintain liaison with and assist national and civic organizations with respect to matters relating to the activities of the Department of Defense.

B. The channel of communication for direction and guidance in public affairs matters of concern to unified and specified commands shall be directly between those commands and the Secretary of Defense whenever such matters are determined by the commander of such a command to require direct control for the accomplishment of the mission assigned to his command, or whenever so directed by the Secretary of Defense. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) is assigned staff responsibility as to such matters and he is authorized to communicate directly as to them with commanders of unified and specified commands, coordinating as appropriate with the military departments and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

C. The Secretaries of the military departments, their civilian assistants, and the military personnel in such departments shall fully cooperate with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) and his staff in a continuous effort to achieve efficient administration of the Department of Defense and to carry out effectively the direction, authority and control of the Secretary of Defense.

## V. AUTHORITIES

A. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), in the course of exercising full staff functions, is hereby specifically delegated authority to:

1. Issue instructions and one-time directive-type memoranda, in writing, appropriate to carrying out policies approved by the Secretary of Defense for his assigned fields of responsibilities in accordance with DOD Directive 5025.1. Instructions to the military departments will be issued through the Secretaries of those departments or their designees.
2. Obtain such reports and information (in accordance with the provisions of DOD Directives 7700.1 and 5158.1) and assistance from the military departments and other Department of Defense agencies as may be necessary to the performance of his assigned functions.
3. Act as the sole agency at the seat of Government for all elements of the Department of Defense, for the release of official information for publication through any form of information media.
4. Assure the implementation of all public affairs policies and procedures of the Department of Defense, and the integration of all Department of Defense Public Affairs plans, programs and related activities.
5. Establish the criteria for, and be the approving authority for all credentials and permits required by United States news gathering media representatives traveling in or outside the United States in connection with coverage of official Department of Defense activities.

6. Monitor military participation in public exhibitions, demonstrations and ceremonies, whether local, national or international.
7. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) shall be the sole agency of the Department of Defense for coordination of all matters covered by this Directive with other departments and agencies of the Government, as appropriate.

B. Other authorities specifically delegated by the Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) in other directives will be referenced in an inclosure to this directive.

#### VI. DEFENSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

There will be a Defense Public Affairs Council to advise the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). The Council shall consist of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), as chairman, the Deputy Assistant Secretary (Public Affairs) and the Chiefs of Information of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

#### VII. CANCELLATION

DOD Directive 5122.5 dated August 17, 1957 and Secretary of Defense Memorandum of 20 November 1958, Subject: "Public Affairs Responsibility for Unified and Specified Commands" are hereby canceled.

#### VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This directive is effective upon publication.

Inclosure 1 to  
DOD Dir.

Reference to Other Authorities Specifically Delegated by the  
Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of De-  
fense (Public Affairs) in Other Directives

No other authorities have been specifically delegated by the Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) as of the date of this directive. Any future specific delegations will be referenced in an inclosure to this directive.

July 10, 1961  
NUMBER 5122.5

GC/DoD

## Department of Defense Directive

SUBJECT Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)

I. GENERAL

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Secretary of Defense and the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, including the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, one of the positions of Assistant Secretary of Defense authorized by the Act is hereby designated the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) with responsibilities, functions, and authorities as prescribed herein.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) is the principal staff assistant to the Secretary of Defense for public information and community relations. He is responsible within the Department of Defense for an integrated DoD public affairs program which will:

1. Provide the American people with maximum information about the Department of Defense consistent with national security.
2. Initiate and support activities contributing to good relations between the Department of Defense and all segments of the public at home and abroad. These activities will be carried out in overseas areas in collaboration with the Department of State and the United States Information Agency.
3. Plan for Department of Defense censorship activities during a declared National Emergency.

III. FUNCTIONS

Under the direction, authority and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public

Affairs) shall perform the following functions in his assigned fields of responsibility:

1. Provide policy guidance to the Department of Defense on public affairs matters and approve public affairs aspects of actions which have national or international significance in the fields of public information and community relations.
2. Develop public affairs plans, policies and programs in support of DoD activities, and approve public affairs actions which have significance to DoD plans, policies and programs.
3. Provide for security review under the provisions of Executive Order 10501 of all material for public release and publication originated by the DoD, including testimony before Congressional Committees, or by its contractors, departmental personnel as individuals, and material submitted by sources outside the Department for such review.
4. Provide for review of official speeches, press releases, photographs, films, and other information originated within the DoD for public release, or similar material submitted for review by other Executive agencies of the Government. This review will be for conflict with established policies or programs of the DoD or of the national Government.
5. Provide news analysis and clipping service to the Secretary of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Military Departments, as required.
6. Supervise the Department of Defense Information Declassification Program.
7. Evaluate and approve requests for DoD cooperation in programs involving relations with the public.
8. Administer a DoD program for the accreditation of news media representatives to the Department, and prescribe attendant policies and procedures.
9. Provide for approval of travel in military carriers of news media representatives, and of other non-Defense personnel, for public affairs purposes.
10. Provide the sole representation of the DoD with regard to formulation or implementation of Government-wide plans, policies, and programs concerning public affairs.
11. Coordinate public affairs in the DoD with those of other departments and agencies of the Government.



12. Provide for the receipt and evaluation of requests for speakers received by the DoD, and, when required, assist in scheduling, programming, and drafting speeches for the participation of qualified personnel.
13. Such other functions as the Secretary of Defense assigns.

IV. RELATIONSHIPS

- A. The Secretaries of the Military Departments and their military and civilian staffs shall exchange information and cooperate fully with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) and his staff in a continuous effort to achieve efficient and economical administration of the public affairs activities of the Department of Defense.
- B. Commanders of the unified and specified commands established by the Secretary of Defense shall similarly cooperate with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) to insure that public affairs activities throughout all echelons of their commands properly reflect efficient and economical administration of public affairs activities as directed by the Secretary of Defense. The channel of communication for direction and guidance in public affairs matters shall be directly between those commands and the Secretary of Defense. As to such matters, the ASD(PA) is authorized to communicate directly with commanders of unified and specified commands, coordinating on operational matters with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, as appropriate, with the military departments.
- C. All major components of the Department of Defense shall secure the advice of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) through established command channels before taking actions which have significant public affairs implications.
- D. All major components of the Department of Defense shall provide pertinent information to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) to enable concurrent planning to the end that maximum information within the limits of national security can be made available to the public.
- E. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) shall coordinate actions, as appropriate, with the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and other agencies of the Department to insure responsive fulfillment of his responsibilities.
- F. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) shall, in the performance of his functions:

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ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLL FORT LEAVENWORTH KS F/G 5/1  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (-ETC(U)  
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1. Maintain liaison with and provide appropriate assistance to all information media with respect to matters relating to the activities of the Department of Defense.
2. Maintain liaison with and assist private organizations with respect to matters relating to the activities of the DoD.

V. AUTHORITIES

- A. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), in the course of exercising full staff functions, is hereby specifically delegated authority to:
  1. Issue instructions and one-time directive-type memoranda, in writing, appropriate to carrying out policies approved by the Secretary of Defense for his assigned fields of responsibilities, in accordance with DoD Directive 5025.1. Instructions to the military departments will be issued through the Secretaries of those departments or their designees.
  2. Through channels established by statute, provide policy guidance to the commands and other organizational entities established by the Secretary of Defense for all public affairs activities, including the release of official information for publication through any form of information media, and the conduct of any informational programs directed in whole or in part to the general public.
  3. Obtain such reports and information (in accordance with the provisions of DoD Directives 7700.1 and 5158.1) and assistance from the military departments and other DoD agencies as may be necessary to the performance of his assigned functions.
  4. Act as the sole DoD agency at the Seat of Government for the release of official information for dissemination through any form of public information media.
  5. Assure the implementation of all public affairs policies and procedures of the DoD, and the integration of all Department of Defense Public Affairs plans, programs, and related activities.
  6. Establish the criteria and be the approving and issuing authority for all credentials required by the United States or foreign news gathering media representatives traveling in or outside the United States in connection with coverage of official DoD activities.

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7. Approve military participation in public exhibitions, demonstrations, and ceremonies of national or international significance.
  8. Make use, as he deems necessary for carrying out his assigned responsibilities and functions, of established facilities in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, military departments, and other DoD agencies.
  9. Act as the sole agency of the Department of Defense for coordination of all matters covered by this Directive with other departments and agencies of the Government, as appropriate.
- B. Other authorities specifically delegated by the Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) will be referenced in an enclosure to this Directive.

VI. DEFENSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

There shall be a Defense Public Affairs Working Group to advise and assist the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) in implementing the provisions of this Directive. The Group shall consist of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), as Chairman, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), and the Chiefs of Information of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

VII. CANCELLATION

DoD Directive 5122.5, dated February 27, 1959, is hereby cancelled. Service regulations will be amended accordingly.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.

*Roswell Gilsbane*  
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Enclosure

Jul 10, 61  
5122.5 (Encl 1)

References to Other Authorities Specifically Delegated by the  
Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of  
Defense (Public Affairs) in Other Directives

No other authorities have been specifically delegated by the Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) as of the date of this directive. Any future specific delegations will be referenced in an enclosure to this directive.

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